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NEAR EAST/SOUTH ASIA REPORT

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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

ARAB LEAGUE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES PROFILED

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 7 Mar 87 pp 43, 44

[Article: "Development of Inter-Arab Trade and Opening the Syrian-Iraqi Borders"]

[Text] Riyadh--The work of the Arab economic attache whom Riyadh invited as a guest for an entire week has ended. This attache is considered to be the first of his kind to operate in the field of joint economic activity, the most important, especially in view of the fact that the actual trade between the Arab countries is feeble, despite the collective agreements first signed about 35 years ago.

Although these agreements express the political will to produce preferential arrangements between the Arab states to permit the free transport of goods between them in stages, the Arab view of trade has been based on the assumption that the simple lifting or shrinking of customs restrictions would guarantee the growth of trade. This has not happened yet. Prince Sultan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, minister of defense and aviation, made this basic point at the 42nd session of the Arab Economic Council. He said: "The period in which we are now living is the period of large economic entities in which there is no place for small units." He emphasized that we are seeing today many attempts to promote growth falter in some parts of the Arab homeland, with our countries still relying mainly on the production and export of raw materials.

Besides the meeting of the Economic and Social Council that was attended by the ministers of finance and economy who argued that the main topic is trade between the Arab states, the economic attache organized an Arab trade conference that was held for the first time. He also brought together representatives of the General Association of Arab Chambers of Industry and Agriculture, chambers of domestic trade, government trade institutions, specialized Arab organizations, and joint Arab companies directly or indirectly concerned with trade. The conference produced a number of important recommendations and submitted them to the council for decisions that would lead to expansion and encouragement of the role of Arab governments and joint Arab agencies in creating the conditions and resources needed for the growth of the Arab trade.

An exhibit of Arab products was set up in accordance with a decision of the Economic Council made at its previous session. The exhibit is limited to token samples of Arab products exported to the Arab countries and joint Arab companies. The purpose is to acquaint individual businessmen and companies with the possibilities of export production in the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia in the person of Prince Sultan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz welcomed any steps that might lead to achieving economic integration and enabling Arab investments to cross the narrow bridge to the broad Arab arena. This Saudi effort was not limited to the last session, for the kingdom is an active member of the economic council. It helped to stimulate it and gave it a larger role when a few years ago it made several suggestions for promoting an agreement to facilitate the trade already existing between the Arab states and replacing it with a new, more progressive trade agreement of greater scope. It also submitted a rough draft of the agreement and invited experts to meet and discuss it. The agreement was concluded and 14 Arab states signed it.

Saudi Arabia also presented the draft of an agreement to guarantee and encourage Arab investments in the Arab states and it invited Arab experts to discuss it. The agreement was pursued until it was approved. Thus far, 17 Arab states have ratified it.

The secretary general of the Arab League seized the opportunity provided by this conference to call attention to the dangers threatening the Arab nation from the continued hemorrhage in the Lebanese strife and the Iraqi-Iranian war. He pointed out that the only beneficiary of all this fighting is Israel, which exploits the Arab disputes to break down the wall of national security.

Dr 'Abd al-Muhsin Zalzalah, assistant secretary general of the Arab League for economic affairs, affirmed that the Arab economic arena is stable and strong and that it is playing a major role in strengthening Arab solidarity with respect to mutual benefits and interests between the countries that make up the one Arab family.

The council impressed the Arab states that have not yet approved both the agreements to facilitate and promote inter-Arab trade and the uniform agreement concerning Arab capital investments with the need to hasten to sign these agreements.

The council also urged greater activity by the operational group charged with pursuing the problem of Arab food sufficiency within the framework of the work plan and implementing program it is preparing for this purpose in order to present it at the next session of the council.

The council called upon the secretary general of the Arab League to continue his efforts to cooperate with the tripartite commission created to deal with the closing of the borders between Syria and Iraq.

As for the joint Arab projects, the general administrative council for economic affairs of the Arab League was asked to invite Arab government experts to meet in the headquarters on 24 June to set the standards by which one can consider for exemptions the joint Arab projects or subsidiary ones in which the parent projects participate provided that the experts draw up a list of the joint Arab projects to be covered by exemption.

The council affirmed the need for a commitment to implement the by-laws and organizational guidelines of the joint Arab projects, especially those concerning elimination of the restrictions on exports, imports, pricing, exemption from fees and taxes, and simplification of the relevant measures so as to facilitate and develop inter-Arab trade and support the products of the joint Arab projects of strategic nature.

In the field of financing, the council urged the Arab Monetary Fund to study effective ways of facilitating payments between the Arab States so as to strengthen inter-Arab trade.

As for trade involving products of the occupied Arab lands and supporting the resistance of the Palestinian Arabs in these lands to enable them to confront the Zionist colonizing policies, which aim at emptying the lands of its inhabitants, and blunt the Zionist economic policies and their effect on the economy of the occupied lands and in order to raise the standard of living of the Palestinian people in the occupied lands, the council decided to speed up the execution of the decision of the Arab Economic and Social Council on this matter. It also charged the secretariat general of the Arab League with continuing to execute the decision, working to provide the requisites for this purpose, and utilizing the resources of the Arab and Islamic funds and financial institutions to support Palestinian exports in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Arab boycott so as to help achieve the goal of strengthening the resistance of the Palestinian people in their homeland without ignoring the rules of the anti-Israel economic blockade.

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EGYPT

FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES MINISUMMIT, AFRICAN PROBLEMS

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 11 Mar 87 pp 6, 7

[Interview with Foreign Minister Butrus Ghali by Tamar Shah Dhu al-Fiqa: "The Cairo African Summit and What the Leaders Are Seeking"]

[Text] Just as Cairo was the site of the first African meeting in the framework of the Organization of African Unity in 1964, today, 23 years later, it is encompassing the African minisummit and playing host to an elite of Africa's leaders and heads, who are meeting with President Husni Mubarak.

Egypt's African face expresses itself this week. Of course Egypt is always preoccupied with the issues of Africa, and its preoccupations are the area on whose ground joint African action comes together.

Egypt has remained loyal to the course of African activity during the past quarter century, approximately, and will continue to be anxious constantly to occupy the positions of African pioneering, altruism and responsibility in the future.

Thus Dr Butrus Ghali began his conversation with AKHIR SA'AH:

On a question regarding this African miniconference which is being held in Cairo, for the first time, inasmuch as it has been the custom to hold it annually in Addis Ababa:

Dr Butrus Ghali said:

"The meeting which will be held in Cairo this 11 March is the meeting of the board of the bureau of the 22nd Organization of African Unity summit. The bureau which is managing the organization's activities this year consists of Egypt, the Congo, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zaire, Mali, Algeria, Zambia and Djibouti. The members of the bureau are entrusted with following up on the execution of what was agreed upon among the heads in the summit conference and planning to make the activities of the next conference a success."

[Question] Did the bureau of the summit board previously meet before in an African capital? What is the significance of its meeting in Cairo?

Dr Butrus Ghali said:

"The fact is that having the bureau of the summit board meet outside the country of the headquarters in Addis Ababa is a precedent of its kind. The members of the board of the bureau saw fit to meet in Egypt, in view of the weight it possesses, which will inevitably result in support for the African organization's ability to confront the urgent problems facing it.

"President Mubarak welcomed this offer. The source of the significance of Egypt's reception is that the desire that the bureau meet in Egypt, for the first time in the history of the organization, reflects the leaders' esteem for Egypt's pioneering role in defending just African causes and, on the other hand, expresses Egypt's belief in the role of the Organization of African Unity as an instrument of common African action.

"It is no secret that this meeting is to be considered the first summit conference at this level to be held in Cairo in 10 years.

"Or that President Husni Mubarak realizes full well the importance of Africa with respect to Egypt and the importance of Egypt with respect to Africa and has therefore been concerned to pursue an active African policy and give special priority to the African cause. Perhaps the holding of this summit in Cairo expresses the appreciation of Africa and its leaders for this Egyptian position."

[Question] Have all the heads responded to the invitation?

[Answer] All the countries have responded to the invitation sent by President Mubarak. In Cairo it will receive a number of prominent African leaders such as President Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Zambia, President Dennis Susu Njisus, the president of the Congo and the present chairman of the organization, who is also making an official visit to Egypt before the conference, President Hasan Julid, the president of Djibouti, President Musifini, who will be making an official visit to Egypt after the conclusion of the conference, President Mobutu, the president of Zaire, President Mumu, the president of Sierra Leone, and Mr Idi Amr, the secretary general of the Organization of African Unity. As for Mali and Algeria, they will be represented at a high level, in view of pressing internal relations of the presidents of the two countries.

The Problem of Africa's Debts

[Question] What are the headings listed in the conference agenda?

[Answer] One of the distinguishing features of this meeting is that it is not restricted to a specific agenda, since the presidents are given the opportunity to discuss all the problems they are anxious to deal with in accordance with their evaluation of the urgency of these problems, especially in the light of the report which the secretary general of the organization will present to the presidents. It will also be possible for them to discuss the extent of the organization's success in carrying out the tasks which were assigned to it by the previous summit meeting.

[Question] What, however, are the subjects that you estimate will impose themselves on the African summit meeting in Cairo?

Dr Butrus Ghali said:

"The fact is that on the basis of my participation in the activities of the ministerial meeting and my meeting with a large number of the African ministers who took part in the meeting, I can foresee that the summit meeting will concentrate on a specific number of subjects, including the economic crisis the continent is facing and the evaluation of our countries' degree of success in coping with it, especially the problem of foreign debts. In addition, the deterioration of the situation in southern Africa and the racist Pretoria regime's continued discriminatory practices will be among the pressing issues the heads will discuss. President Sasu will inform the heads about the outcome of his mediation efforts to resolve the Libyan-Chad conflict. In addition, the commemoration of the passage of 10 years since the holding of the Cairo summit for Arab-African cooperation will no doubt stimulate attention to the need to discuss ways of reviving this cooperation."

[Question] Will the activities and resolutions of the ministerial council be reflected on the Cairo summit?

[Answer] The ministerial council concentrated its activities on a number of vital issues which are of concern to the continent, foremost among them the situation in the south of Africa, Namibia, the delicate economic situation in Africa and the Chad issue, in addition to other important subjects such as those of the refugees in Africa, Arab-African cooperation and guidance of the organization's activities from the financial and administrative standpoints. All the ministerial council's resolutions and recommendations will be presented to the meeting of the heads of countries and prime ministers, and, since the Cairo summit will prepare for the enlarged summit meeting, it will have to address itself to these subjects.

The Events of Southern Africa

[Question] What is the significance of the events of southern Africa, and the position of Egypt, in particular, regarding these at the next conference?

Dr Butrus Ghali said:

"In the discussion of this section at the ministerial conference in Addis Ababa I actually explained the homogeneity and unity of the African continent, the solidity of its position and its determination to eliminate the last vestiges of colonialism in the continent by eliminating the racist discriminatory Pretoria regime in South Africa and reaching agreement to offer the necessary support to the front-line states to help them cope with the pressures the Pretoria regime is exerting on them and to help them bear the economic effects they will suffer as a result of Pretoria's vindictive measures when the compulsory economic penalties against this regime are carried out."

"Egypt was in the forefront of the countries which called for the need to set out a new strategy to cope with the current stage in our joint confrontation with Pretoria's racist dominance and racial discrimination."

[Question] How will the summit meeting deal with the increasingly critical economic situation in Africa?

[Answer] The discussion of the critical economic situation that prevails in Africa took up a large portion of the ministerial council transactions, since it closely studied the report of the permanent Organization of African Unity steering committee which has been working hard to set out a strategy to carry out the program of priorities for economic revival in Africa and the United Nations 1986-90 action program for revival and economic development in Africa. The crystallization of a unified African stand vis-a-vis the major international negotiations which will take place this year was also discussed, including multilateral trade negotiations and the seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The progress which was attained in preparing for the international conference on Africa's foreign debts was also discussed. At the Cairo conference, its members will study in depth what the activities of the Organization of African Unity have arrived at in this regard, and it will of course hear the presentation President Sasu will make in his report and adopt the necessary resolutions and plans to cope with these economic challenges.

[Question] The anniversary of 10 years since the holding of the first Arab-African summit in Cairo will occur this March. Will the current meeting deal with this subject?

[Answer] I hope that the meeting will deal with this subject. At the ministerial meeting in Addis Ababa, [word missing] my colleague ministers in this regard. I called for the need to confront the predicament which is facing Arab-African cooperation with the utmost objectivity and frankness in the context of the exercise of self-criticism, and I called for the formation of a committee of wise men to discuss ways of reviving and stimulating this cooperation since broad scope exists for expanding it.

[Question] Is the 11 March summit conference in Cairo addressing itself to the issue of Chad?

[Answer] President Sasu Njistu in the first 6 months of his chairmanship of the organization carried out intensive activity and made continuous contacts for the sake of finding a peaceful, just solution to the Chad-Libyan struggle. There is no doubt that he will be concerned to inform the heads of the fruits of his efforts and the results of his contacts in the report he will present to the board of the bureau at the Cairo conference.

Egypt in Africa

[Question] Egyptian activity in Africa has increased perceptibly of late. How do you explain that?

Dr Butrus Ghali said,

"Egyptian activity in Africa is linked to Egyptian national interests and is related to total solidarity between Egypt and all the African countries. Egyptian affiliation with the African continent is an actual fact. Following Egyptian activity in Africa, the continent today is witnessing African activity in Egypt embodied in this gathering of African heads and the distinguished leaders of our continent, who are meeting in Cairo by invitation of President Husni Mubarak.

"Two official visits which President Dennis Sasu Njisus, president of the People's Republic of the Congo, and President Yuri Musifini, president of the Republic of Uganda, are making to the Arab Republic of Egypt, in response to an invitation from President Husni Mubarak, are occurring in conjunction with the holding of the African minisummit conference which the members of the board of the bureau of the 22nd summit of the Organization of African Unity are participating in. During the Congo president's visit, a commercial agreement between the two countries will be signed, and this will help develop bilateral trade and support the two countries' relations. There also are growing relations between Egypt and Uganda and the visit of the president of Uganda will work to develop and expand them in various areas, among them commercial relations in the area of armaments, especially in the light of the visit the Uganda defense minister recently made to Egypt in February 1987.

"Africa, as far as we are concerned, is the future, security, stability, the realm of life and the source of a strength which can exist only through homogeneity, solidarity and unity."

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EGYPT

COLUMNIST ON DEBTS, USSR TIES, SECTARIAN STRIFE

JN300935 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 27 Mar 87 pp 1, 3

[Article by Ibrahim Nafi' in the "With Calm" column]

[Excerpt] There are only two ways to destroy a nation, stop its progress, and strip it of its ability and influence: Firstly, by burdening it with debts until it loses its intrinsic ability to grow, turning it into a satellite of its debtors unable to disobey their orders. Secondly, by inciting sectarian strife in the country and splitting it into disputing statelets wasting their energy in waging wars against one another and seeking protection, aid, and weapons from foreign sides. These are the two ways to destroy any country. I remembered this serious dictum on two important occasions this week: Firstly, Egypt's success in improving relations with the Soviet Union, the rescheduling of Egypt's debts, postponing repayments of these debts for 25 years, and the reopening of the Soviet door to Egyptian exports. Secondly, the attempts to sow differences between the nation's two elements, [Muslims and Christians] which events and the various ties have unified throughout history.

Regarding the first, we should appreciate this Soviet step as well as Egypt's policies which try to achieve balanced relations with the two superpowers preserving, at the same time, its friendship with the United States. Egypt tries to maintain good relations with all countries regardless of their political trends.

Hence, we should admit that the Soviet Union has proved that it understands Egypt's circumstances and appreciates Egyptian efforts to raise the living standards of its people through development and construction. Therefore, the Soviet Union has decided to postpone repayment of Egypt's debts to it for 25 years without interest as a contribution to promoting development in Egypt. There is no doubt that this just position has received both official and popular welcome in Egypt. This welcome was expressed in various ways. One of these ways which drew my attention was the contents of a reader's letter published in the AL-AHRAM readers' corner. He strongly praised this Soviet decision and said that although he was not a Marxist or Leninist he would like to pay tribute to anyone who contributes to backing Egypt's efforts for development and alleviation of the people's suffering.

This is the meaning of this important event that has taken place and is an example and model. The deep-rooted Egyptian people are undoubtedly aware of facts and they know by means of their national feelings the value of any support for their efforts toward development and construction. They expect this participation from friends before others. This Soviet step deserves commendation and praise, especially since the Soviet Union had played an undeniable role in the first 5-year development plan, in the construction of the High Dam, and in other gigantic industrial projects.

We hope that this participation will be an example for the other friends who know better than others Egypt's efforts to raise the living standard of its people and who know how much it suffered in order to pay the high interest of its debts and how much it had undergone so that it would not stop paying.

However, Egypt will continue its efforts to end the problem of its debt to its friends in the West and to rationalize its use of loans. Egypt should take pride in the fact that it has implemented productive projects valued at 30 billion pounds. This in itself is a factor of strength, not weakness.

The second occasion which coincided with the first is the devilish attempts to incite sectarian strife in a country which throughout history has not known sectarian strife. The relationship between the two elements of the nation has been and will continue to be an example to be followed by the followers of religions which preach goodness, mercy, love, and good advice. Egypt will never allow any tamperers to destroy this strong relationship on which the nation's pillars are based, namely; national unity. Therefore, Egypt will never tolerate any side or tamperer who wants to harm the people's destiny. By this we not only end the strife, but also protect a nation, a state, and the future of future generations.

In this regard we request everyone not to respond to these attempts but to confront them. We would also like to ask all parties: Where are your efforts to counter these attempts and uproot them? Where is this serious issue in your electoral programs and in the statements of your candidates and in your party propaganda? The party most worthy of the voters' support is the party whose candidates contribute to safeguarding national unity. The candidates most worthy of winning the voters' support are those who set an example in honest and rational dealing with these petty attempts to incite division.

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EGYPT

DAILY URGES REVIEW OF TREATY WITH ISRAEL

PM301543 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 24 Mar 87 p 12

[Dr Mahjub 'Umar article: "The Treaty and the U.S. Commitment"]

[Text] In 2 days' time it will be 8 years since the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed in Washington on 26 March 1979. On the Egyptian side it was signed by late President Anwar al-Sadat, on the Israeli side by Menahem Begin, and on the U.S. side by former President Jimmy Carter, who is currently visiting Egypt on this occasion.

Although Carter signed at the bottom of the document as "witness to the signature," the fact is that the treaty was Carter's greatest and perhaps his only achievement during his term of office.

Carter was not a mere witness. There was no need for his testimony as the signing took place in front of television cameras and a large crowd of journalists and officials from various countries. In other words, the "contract" between Al-Sadat and Begin needed no witness.

Carter was the architect of this agreement, its proponent, and the one who gained most from it. This treaty realized the U.S. strategy to "detach" Egypt from the conflict so that, once this had been done, the United States could deal with every Arab country individually and freeze the Palestine problem and even seek to eliminate the Palestinian struggle, as events have shown that it has been doing.

In order to confirm that the United States is the author of the treaty and the one responsible for it, Carter on the same day sent a letter to al-Sadat and Begin which was considered one of the documents attached to the treaty. The letter said in part: "In case of violation or threat of violation of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the United States, at the request of either or both parties, will consult with the parties in this regard and will take other measures that it may deem necessary to ensure compliance with the treaty."

Perhaps many people who opposed the treaty as a whole did not pay much attention to its appendices, including the letter "binding" upon its parties in which the U.S. President, with the approval of the signatories, said that the

United States "will take the necessary measures to ensure commitment to the treaty." The wording of the provision permits all kinds of measures which, of course, could include military intervention, economic blockade, or any other measures the United States might deem fit "to ensure compliance with the treaty."

Some people may imagine that the treaty is confined to ensuring withdrawal and the establishment of diplomatic relations, as in the case between countries in normal circumstances. But the actual treaty provisions, which many failed to study or note, reveal serious obligations which the signatories, including the Egyptian president, have adopted, obligations affecting the very essence of Egyptian sovereignty, at least in internal matters.

Clause two or article three of the said treaty provides among other things that "each party shall refrain from organizing, inciting, provoking, helping, or participating in any acts of war, acts of aggression, subversive activities, or acts of violence against the other party in any place. It shall also pledge to ensure that perpetrators of such actions are brought to trial."

If the reader ponders the terms "subversive activities" and "acts of violence," their ambiguity, and the conditions under which they were previously applied, he will see that they cover every opposition and even every expression of an opinion about Israel's racist character, for example, every stand that refuses to deal with the Israelis, and every article written against them, not only in Egypt but anywhere. In such circumstances the Egyptian Government is obliged to try whoever is responsible. If it does not do so then the United States pledges to take any "other necessary measures" to ensure that this is done. And because the term "appropriate measures" is a general and ambiguous term, it could, as we already said, mean military intervention or economic blockade, or even certain special operations against individuals or groups which the Egyptian Government may fail to try, or the hijacking of Egyptian planes carrying Palestinian fighters and Egyptian pilots and officials in international airspace, as happened in the case of the Egyptair airliner.

Perhaps those who signed the treaty 8 years ago justified signing it and accepting the United States as being responsible for implementing it because they imagined that this was a major gain on the grounds that the U.S. commitment to the two sides--the Egyptian and the Israeli sides--is equal.

Perhaps those who defended the signing of the treaty at that time thought that the United States, having accepted "full participation," as they put it, would adopt an impartial stand between Egypt and Israel.

Maybe this was the illusion 8 years ago, but the events of past years have proved it to be quite wrong. They have proved what was already known--that the United States and Israel are at least united in confronting the Arab countries, including Egypt, indeed Egypt in particular.

Israel violated the treaty provisions right from the beginning by resuming the building of settlements. It further violated them by its continued

aggression against the Arab countries, when it stopped the negotiations on full autonomy, rejected the Egyptian and even the U.S. interpretation of it, continued its racist propaganda, persisted in denying Palestinian rights, invaded Lebanon, and committed genocide. This is in addition to other undeclared, continuing, and recurring violations. Nevertheless, the United States did not intervene in order to "ensure compliance with the treaty." Indeed, it acted to the contrary. The proponents of the treaty should ask Carter himself to give testimony while he is here in Cairo.

What is strange is that the signatories to the treaty on the Egyptian side, who are a group of select Egyptian veteran diplomats, have closed the door to its being reviewed like any other treaty. Indeed, it is an eternal treaty that does not set a review date or a means for doing that. Apart from a clause that refers to the possibility of reviewing security arrangements in Sinai, although no alteration can be made without the approval of both sides, which means giving the Israeli enemy the right to veto any proposal or measure proposed by the Egyptian Government.

Article three of the said treaty incorporates other strange provisions including, for example, a clause that says that "the two sides recognize and respect one another's right to live in peace within secure and recognized borders."

It is no secret to anybody, especially experienced diplomats, that so far Israel has no "borders" and that the only borders which Israel has recognized are its "borders" with Egypt (of course, with the exclusion of the maneuvering and bargaining over 18 border points, most importantly Tabah). As for its other "borders," they are still not defined or recognized by anybody. Israel is still expanding those borders, as it is doing in southern Lebanon and the Golan.

Of course, the measures which the United States will take to ensure commitment to this clause of the treaty are not clear.

Furthermore, there are many things in the treaty that encroach on Egyptian sovereignty and are contrary to Egypt's Arab and international obligations. Events of the past years have shown that Israel and the United States agree on their interpretations of the treaty provisions contrary to Egyptian interests.

Has the time not yet come to review this treaty? Undoubtedly this is imperative. It is the duty of officials as well as of all those who some years ago thought that the treaty could be the beginning of a "political operation" that would force the Israeli enemy to retreat and to make concessions but found instead that it gave him a free hand to expand, colonize, invade, and plot. The effect of this treaty has been the open-door policy, sedition, a morass of debts, and much great isolation in the Egyptian and international arenas than was imagined.

The only benefit Egypt obtained from this treaty was the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from Sinai. But this objective could have been achieved through other means and at much smaller expense, just as the destruction of the Bar-Lev line during the great crossing in 1973 was achieved.

The time has come for all Egyptian political forces to discuss ways of getting rid of the commitment to this treaty, taking into consideration, of course, the fact that the United States will seek to impose its provisions. But the United States is not an invincible enemy. Freedom and independence have a price of sacrifices which peoples can afford.

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EGYPT

AL-SHA'B WELCOMES ABU-GHAZALAH VIEW OF ISRAEL

PM021431 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 28 Mar 87 p 12

[Dr al-Shafi'i Bashir article: "Congratulations to the Marshal on His Speech About Egyptian and Arab Strategy"]

[Excerpts] Every time we see a ray of light we cling to it the same way a drowning person clings to a lifebelt, particularly since we have been overwhelmed by illusions and our life has been shrouded in the fog of false hopes about peace between Egypt and Israel and the prosperity it will bring us, as the maker of Camp David claimed.

The ray of light came through the television, which we seldom watch. The speaker on this occasion was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and War Production Marshal 'Abd-al-Halim Abu-Ghazalah.

I watched the expression on his face as he said things that are new to us; it was as if we were seeing and hearing him for the first time. I wished that I was present at the sixth strategic seminar being held at the Military Researches Institute, in order to see him closely as he was saying:

"Egyptian military doctrine emanates from religious doctrine. It is a peaceful, defensive strategy also emanating from the Holy Koran and the noble, prophetic Sunnah. Our doctrine aims at achieving our Arab nation's lofty objectives. We are a Muslim state that believes in God. The doctrine is in our heart and we fight for its sake and make sacrifices for the sake of God. We believe that a soldier who is religious and pious in mind and heart is unquestionably capable of making sacrifices regardless of the weapon in his possession."

The Potential Enemy

This speech by the number one man responsible for the Egyptian nation and for defending its realm and sanctities has broken the barrier of illusion which al-Sadat erected on our borders in 1977 when he declared that the October War was the last war with Israel. That is a deceitful and ignorant claim that ignores the facts of history and of the Israeli doctrine in the area. The result of al-Sadat's principle was the consolidation of Israeli doctrine and the clarification of its strategy while, on the other hand, it led Egyptian doctrine astray and caused Egyptian military strategy to lose its impact.

We border three countries: Sudan, Libya, and Israel. We must establish our strategy on the basis of who is the potential enemy. We will not find this enemy at our borders with Sudan, nor even on our borders with Libya, regardless of how the regimes in Egypt and Libya may differ, because the blood of the two Arab peoples in the two countries is one and so are their roots, destiny, and future. But blood, roots, doctrine, destiny, and future are quite conflicting elements between Egypt and Israel, which historical facts and the facts of religious doctrine place in the position of the definite enemy of Egypt's security and safety and indeed of the security and safety of the Arab and Islamic nation.

Our Security and Sanctities

Israel has made us understand in practical manner that it is the potential and indeed the definite enemy of our security and safety as well as the security and safety of the Arab and Islamic nation.

Since 1948 Israel has never stopped its aggressive expansion in implementation of its religious doctrine of Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates. Israel did not stop its aggressive expansion even after the conclusion of the Camp David agreements. Indeed, it escalated its aggression with the criminal raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor and the PLO headquarters in Tunis as well as the actual invasion of Lebanon and theft of waters from southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights. This is in addition to stepping up the building of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza regardless of the UN resolutions and international condemnation.

The gravest of all its offenses was to seize holy Jerusalem and make it the eternal, unified capital of Israel, as Menahem Begin put it. It was as if Israel was dealing us and the Arab and Islamic world a blow in our most sacred holy places.

Was not holy Jerusalem the holy and pure place where God sent His prophet Muhammad, peace and prayers be upon him, on a night sojourn from the Holy Mosque in Mecca to al-Aqsa Mosque?

Did not our prophet, peace and prayers be upon him, pray in al-Aqsa Mosque during his nocturnal journey?

Does not al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two qiblas [direction of prayer] third holy place, belong to Islam and the Islamic nation?

On the anniversary of the Prophet's night sojourn we cannot but congratulate Marshal 'Abd-al-Halim Abu-Ghazalah on his speech, which took us back to the sound strategic base of our armed forces, the doctrinal base that clearly defines the objective. Our objective is to preserve our holy places and defend our security and safety in the face of the doctrinaire Israeli enemy, who is lying in wait for us and facing us with his expansionist religious doctrine at the expense of our doctrine, our land, and the Arab and Islamic land in Jersualem and elsewhere.

Congratulations to Marshal Abu-Ghazalah on upholding the Holy Koran and the noble, prophetic Sunnah as a basis for our armed forces' strategy. Our armed forces will find in the Holy Koran and in the tradition of the Prophet, peace and prayers be upon him, much about Israel and the Israelis, their deep-seated enmity, their hostile intentions, and their menacing danger to our security, safety, and sanctities.

Let the "God is Great" banner with which we won the 1973 October War rise among our armed forces and let the shout "God is Great" rise as the slogan of our armed forces, with its strategic concept unpolluted by the Camp David radiation in the way that our food and drink have been polluted by the Chernobyl radiation.

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EGYPT

DAILY ON ISRAELI STATEMENT ON BORDERS

NC040521 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2250 GMT 3 Apr 87

[Text] Cairo, 3 Apr (MENA)--The daily AL-AHRAM denounces statements by Avraham Tamir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, to the effect that his country is not going to define its borders before there is peace in the Middle East and that Israel, with the Golan annexed, can sustain a population of six millions. The paper says the remarks betray hostile intentions, because countries cannot acquire extra territories out of thin air.

In its edition of tomorrow, Saturday, AL-AHRAM says that Israel is about the only country on earth with no known borders. The paper adds that a country must have borders and that it is strange that Israel, a country legally accepted as a full UN member, should publicly state that its map is still unfinished.

AL-AHRAM says that Tamir's statements, if true, means that the Israelis want to have their cake and eat it. How can there be a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East, the paper asks, if the Golan is not only to stay under Israeli occupation but is also to be considered part of the national territory of the (?new) state? As for the West Bank and Gaza, the paper adds, it would be hard for anyone to believe that Israel will withdraw from them.

The question for those who, it is hoped, will take part in the peace talks, AL-AHRAM says, is this: On what basis are the talks to be conducted if the occupying party still believes in the peace of "open borders?"

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EGYPT

SINAI TOURISM IS 'PLAYING WITH FIRE'

PM031033 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 28 Mar 87 p 5

[Article by Dr Ahmad Husayn al-Sawi: "The Foothold Excuse and Pleasure Tourism"]

[Excerpts] I had the opportunity recently to tour all parts of southern Sinai, a most magnificent and beloved region of our homeland.

Roads are now hard-surfaced; construction is rapidly progressing in populated areas and areas soon to be populated; splendid resorts are spreading wherever the magnificence and beauty of nature prevail. Extraordinary Egyptian efforts have been made to end this region's wildness, confirm its Egyptian affiliation, and transform it into a tourist attraction. These efforts deserve every appreciation and admiration.

But behind this glittering facade there are some hidden facts which spoil its brightness and badly harm all the sincere and constructive efforts being made. Indeed, these facts cast doubt on the motives and intentions behind this gigantic building and construction project.

It is clear that efforts are being centered on promoting tourism at these wonderful beaches which possess all constituents of pleasure and beauty: clear calm waters, soft sand, a wonderful climate, and breathtaking scenery. But anyone who stops to think what is happening only a few years after tourist facilities were established in Nuwaybi', Dahab, and Sharm al-Shaykh will realize that the current developments have in fact something in common and confirm that there is a carefully designed plan aimed at directing tourism to these beaches in a particular direction that would chiefly serve Israel and its objectives. How did this happen?

When Israel agreed to withdraw from Sinai, it did not withdraw easily. In fact, as we know, it indulged in its transgression and imposed on us unjust security and military conditions in exchange for this withdrawal.

We also know how, through force, Israel managed to establish a major tourist base, namely the Sonesta Hotel with its magnificent beach. In this regard Israel also secured a tourism agreement whereby Israeli citizens are allowed to enter southern Sinai via Taba without a visa for 7 days. Thus, tourists reach Taba by Israeli buses, then Egyptian buses transport them to Dahab, Nuwaybi', and Sharm al-Shaykh!

What has been done in this regard? What is really striking is that the planning of our tourism in these areas completely coincided with Israel's objectives. It seems that what happened between the two parties was more than a coincidence of viewpoints. It is clear that tourist establishments in southern Sinai cooperate fully with their Israeli counterparts. Therefore, tourism in the region has assumed an unfamiliar face that serves not only tourist purposes, but much more than that. The reader will easily come to this conclusion: Most Israeli tourists and tourists who come through Israel do not go to southern beaches for innocent pleasure. The two sexes mix and live together. We provide them with unlimited facilities:

--Tourist establishments often set up tents and cabins in these places for lovers who come as "couples." Prices are very reasonable.

--Tourists are not required to specify their relationship with the persons sharing their rooms, tents, or cabins, though hotels everywhere else require this. Tourists are also not required to produce identification.

--There are beaches allocated for nude swimmers, both men and women, in Dahab and Nuwaybi', where we witnessed disgusting, obscene, and bloodcurdling scenes. May God rest the soul of Martyr Sulayman Khatir [Egyptian soldier who opened fire on Israeli tourists], who could not bear the sight from his control point in Taba and, consequently, was spurred into action.

Have the dimensions of this hellish plot become clear?

All evidence confirms that Israel aims to achieve a kind of "comfortable" normalization in this direction by spreading corruption, of which we have seen many aspects. A number of young Egyptians go to these places and are attracted by the strange things they see, so they might be tempted to do the same. There might also be an opportunity for them to establish relationships with your Israelis. The Bedouins--who have been weakened and swept away by this creeping tourist industry which has been covering the entire area--are now providing tourists with services and, in fact, have now grown accustomed to this kind of tourism and wish it to remain. Israel has thus guaranteed itself their loyalty, or friendship at least.

But a strange thing which is the cause of great regrets and sadness is that there is complete cooperation on the part of Egyptian officials to help this plot succeed. Are they too being swept along by the tide? Have they been misled? Have they been attracted by the profit and personal gains tourism brings?

My colleagues and I talked to some local officials about these aspects of tourism which violate the customs and traditions which we were raised on. They could not talk frankly to us; they dodged the issue; they gave unsatisfactory and irrelevant answer. Instead they seemed surprised, saying they did not know of beaches allocated to women. Some were franker and braver and said that successful tourism is tourism which does not impose restrictions on anyone and that if we want sound planning for tourism we should eliminate the word "forbidden"! O people, wake up. This is playing with fire and frivolity which will result in dangerous consequences in the future.

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HAYKAL ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, FOREIGN TIES

PM311625 London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 28 Mar-4 Apr 87 p 19-24

[Interview with Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal by Ihsan Bakr in Cairo; date not given]

[Excerpts] AL-TADAMUN: Before we ask about the domestic situation we would like to ask you about Egyptian-U.S. relations and how you appraise them at present. Undoubtedly there is a crisis or the shadow of a crisis because of the debts problem and the interest on military debts owed to Washington. The U.S. stand so far seems intransigent, and there are those who demand a decisive Egyptian stand while others call for emulating the example of Brazil's recent action. Mr Haykal, how can Egypt come out of this crisis and regain its health?

Haykal: First, I must say that I am one of those who earlier advocated the need to deal with the United States and called for its neutralization and not its neutrality. I will never tire of saying that neutralization is a stand imposed by forces that demand it rather than opted for voluntarily. In other words, neutralization of the United States would be a stand imposed on it by the total sum of factors of Arab strength and not something freely chosen by it. Given the freedom of choice the United States would choose total partiality with Israel against the Arabs for a variety of psychological, security, and strategic reasons. For this reason I have for years been unenthusiastic about the method of head-on clash with the United States; I have called for the foolishness of power in its policy to be confronted using the method of the Spanish matador in confronting a raging bull rushing toward him.

Unfortunately we have changed out "head-to-head" method and immediately shifted to the method of "prostration" before the United States. This is what we see happening before us in the area today. Most of the Arab world is today prostrate at the U.S. doorstep, capable only of begging for its compassion and asking only for its satisfaction. Which is a sad situation. What makes it sad is that it is uncalled for as well as unnecessary. Moreover, it will achieve no objective or target.

With regard to its being uncalled for, we should perhaps recall that the United States needs the Arabs more than the Arabs need it.

With regard to the fact that it will achieve no objective, Arab pleas for compassion will only lead to further U.S. arrogance. This has always been the law of a relationship between dignity and humiliation.

All these things are evident. Perhaps the real fault lies in the present Arab political will more than in the shortcomings of Arab capabilities.

The total sum of what I have just tried to explain is that Arab-U.S. relations as a whole and not just the Egyptian-U.S. relations are incorrect.

Egypt, of course, is no exception to the general Arab situation. Perhaps I may permit myself to say without exaggeration that the Egyptian political decision--and not the Egyptian people's decision--at one stage played a major role in bringing about this situation. This happened when its nerve and mind were overwhelmed by the claim that 99 percent of the cards for solving the Middle East problem were in U.S. hands.

To be fair we must say that at one stage the Egyptian political decision played a major role, though not the biggest or the most predominant role. The biggest and most predominant role was the responsibility of the proponents of a different decision who one day must be brought to account. But since your question concerns Egypt, I have confined my talk to it and nobody else.

Fortunately--I am not sure if this is the right expression--nobody today can reiterate, even in a whisper, the old and ignorant claim that 99 percent of the cards for a solution are in U.S. hands or reiterate even the more ignorant and dangerous claim which followed the earlier one about a U.S. Marshall Plan for Egypt that would achieve prosperity for it once it accepted a Pax Americana.

Nobody now reiterates, even in a whisper, these old claims. We now hear voices saying that the United States is about to lose its credibility in the area or that it has actually lost it. There is no harm in hearing such voices, although they have come too late and at the wrong time, for the wrong reason, in the wrong language. Never mind...What matters is what comes next.

Your question asks about a crisis or the shadow of a crisis because of the debts problem and the interests on military debts. I agree that there is a crisis or a shadow of a crisis, but it is not primarily the crisis of civilian or military debts. The crisis and its shadow in my view constitute more a crisis of will than of debts.

The will of any party is not a wish that can be realized by talking about it or by assuring oneself and others that his will is independent and can be influenced only by domestic and national interests. Will is a condition concomitant on objective factors perceived by the eye and expressed by action. It is inconceivable that will could be otherwise. The will cannot always be exercised through adopting a "decisive stand," as you call it, because such a "decisive stand" is often a sign of lost nerve rather than strong will.

Let us come to what Brazil did when it announced a moratorium on the payment of interest on its debts. The fact is that the developing countries' debts to the advanced countries have become an international and humanitarian scandal, because the defaulters have become the providers of capital to the advanced countries. The defaulting countries this year, according to World Bank figures, will pay the advanced countries 29 billion dollars more than they will receive from them.

Egypt, of course, is included in these figures. I believe that Egypt must study the debt question from all its angles, including that of U.S. aid or so-called U.S. aid. Perhaps I may venture to say that we give more than we take, particularly if we exclude the outright arms grants. Perhaps I should say that I do not like this idea of arms grants and I cannot persuade myself to accept it because I see it as diametrically opposed to the logic of independent and the concept of nonalignment to which we claim to be committed. You may go back to the founding fathers' 1961 declaration of nonalignment in Belgrade to see that there is a clear and categorical provision on the question of arms.

The principle of nonalignment allows a country to purchase arms from any source without this affecting nonalignment. But when a country takes arms free of charge from a party, it means that it is part of the strategy of that party. Nobody gives anything for nothing. There is always something in return in international relations.

The whole question, therefore, needs to be revised.

What Brazil has done is interesting. There are those who preceded Brazil both in words and in deeds, but what gave Brazil's action greater impact is the fact that it is one of the biggest debtor countries; its debts total about 120 billion dollars and the interest on them is exorbitant. But we must note that Brazil is a country with great resources and is capable of managing its affairs steadily until it renegotiates with its creditors. Moreover, the magnitude of Brazilian resources tempts the creditors to be patient and reassures them that there is always a guarantee if understanding can be reached. The question of debts must be tackled, but success in tackling it is conditional on confronting it globally. I believe that the climate for doing so is favorable. I wish that Egypt would assume a pioneering role in marshalling international efforts in this direction, but it has not done so. In any case this is one aspect of a wider issue, which is the question of "will" which in the whole Arab world is far more modest than the amount of strategic capabilities. These capabilities in themselves are more than just financial resources.

AL-TADAMUN: How can Egypt come out of all this?

Haykal: It is a major problem. But initially Egypt must set out for itself what it wants and exercise its will to achieve it, backing it with all its human and historical potentials. Egypt has not yet decided on its strategic

option; it is still confused and has not decided on anything. From what you hear you do not know, for example, whether it is an integral part of the Arab world, is linked to it by kinship, or merely neighbors it.

Another example relating to the above is the question of Israel. When somebody says that he sees Egypt's role as one of mediating between the Arabs and Israel, it is my right and the right of others to feel that there is wooliness in some people's heads.

Yet another example is what Shim'on Peres attributed to some Egyptian officials following his recent visit to Cairo. Peres attributed to some of his interlocutors the allegation that they no longer cling to the PLO as the Palestinian people's representative in any international conference to be held. He also claimed that they showed understanding of Israel's attitude to the Soviet Union and its precondition that the latter should resume diplomatic relations with Israel and open the gates to unlimited Jewish emigration. Furthermore, Peres added that Cairo would intercede with China to recognize Israel and establish diplomatic relations with it.

Such nonsense, officially broadcast from Israel, should have been denied. The mere silence over it means that there are those who have lost touch with place and time.

AL-TADAMUN: In a few days' time, on 6 April to be exact, Egyptian People's Assembly election will take place. How do you view the political map in Egypt in the light of the present struggle between the existing parties and the political movements that have not yet been legitimized? How do you view the present election laws? There is the question of the recent alliances that have lumped together the Socialist Labor Party [SLP], the Liberal Party, and the Muslim Brotherhood in one single list while the NPUG is entering the election on a list of its own, al-Wafd had rejected the list system, and the Nasirites are boycotting the elections. How do you view all these trends?

Haykal: Without detracting from the importance of the coming parliamentary election, I do not think that what is happening in this arena occupies a great area on the Egyptian political map.

There are vast areas of the Egyptian political map that are unexplored or, at least, not clearly defined.

The total number of those who are interested in direct and formal political action--that is, the members registered in party registers--is less than 1 million, while those entitled to vote in the general election total 21 million. It is these 21 million people that can be described as forming the Egyptian political map. The 1 million party members who are formally or directly interested in political action comprise less than 5 percent of the total.

There is another fact: Those who actually and effectively have taken part in elections and referenda since parliamentary life began is no more than 20 percent of those eligible to vote.

AL-TADAMUN: What does this mean?

Haykal: It means that the Egyptian political map we are talking about is only a small part of the real political map and is almost marginal in comparison.

This, however, does not mean that the majority of the Egyptian people are negative and do not care about what is happening in the apparent political activities in the country's life. On the contrary, the majority have come forward to participate effectively every time there seemed to be something real likely to be achieved. They did so in the 1919 revolution, in the 1935 rising, in the 23 July 1952 revolution, in the agrarian reform, during the Suez crisis, during the building of the High Dam, during wartime, and during the times when there was hope for peace.

But the masses did not participate in all this through the ballot box. The ballot box game seemed restricted and sometimes oppressed rather than being a means for expressing the people's movements and activities.

I am one of those who observe the movement of the general economic, social, and intellectual growth of the future forces and capabilities and find that it embodies hope for the future, including hope for a real and genuine democracy that is capable of existing because its safeguards are inherent in it and do not come as a grant or a pledge from abroad.

Yet I would say that the elections with the present multiplicity of political bodies in Egypt are of extreme importance.

AL-TADAMUN: What in your estimate are the most important challenges Egypt is facing at present? How would it be possible to come out of the acutely critical economic crisis and the critical Arab situation in the light of the existence of Egyptian-Israeli relations?

Haykal: I can imagine what you mean by critical economic situation and critical Arab situation. But I totally reject the idea of a critical situation. A critical situation happens to individuals, whereas in the case of nations there is no critical situation. Rather there are problems, and problems have solutions and must have solutions. The first solution is the will. I would not like you to imagine that will means orders and instructions. Will is the ability to express the capabilities of nations, to lead them by persuading them; it is also the ability to convince others, even if such conviction has to be imposed on foreign parties by all the means and capabilities of managing a domestic or national conflict.

From a practical standpoint the Egyptian economic problems are difficult but, honestly, they can be resolved. Economically Egypt is not in a critical situation but rather is facing an economic problem whose solution is possible.

On the other hand, Egypt on the Arab plane is in a difficult but not critical position. It has realized that there is no alternative to its Arabism just as others have realized that there is no alternative to Egypt's role.

The problem is how we can wake up from the nightmares of the indifferent and the somnolent to the horizons of what is possible and desirable for the alert and vigilant.

AL-TADAMUN: President Husni Mubarak is about to begin a second term of office. We would like to ask you frankly for your appraisal of his first term of office and what you have to say to him or ask of him.

Haykal: As one of those who are following his work from distance I must recognize his role and his efforts. We are before a man who suddenly found himself in the number one position of responsibility. He has tried all he can and worked hard on what he believes is his duty. If we are to be fair we must recognize the man's success in many fields. The first of these was that he shifted Egypt from an atmosphere heavy with terror--the terror of the authority and of its opponents--to an atmosphere in which the word replaced the bullet and the newspaper replaced the clandestine leaflet. This is an achievement unmatched in the Arab world. It is not something little.

He inherited colossal problems, to which some mistakes have been added during his regime.

I cannot hold him responsible for what he inherited, but certainly he is responsible for the mistakes made during his regime. In any case, these mistakes are a matter of detail. What matters in my view is that he is not resisting progress. What is important is that he is not obstructing the natural course of growth or trying to impede it. What is important is that he knows to a large extent the limits of power and the public rights. In the long term this is a great advantage.

As to what I would like to tell him during his second term of office, I am not here to give advice to the president. If we exclude advice, there remains the prayers. I wish him success in a difficult, though not impossible mission.

In any case, his second term of office most probably will be a continuation of the first, because things do not change overnight as some people imagine.

It now occurs to me to go further so as to beg, rather than wish, the president during his second term of office to pay special attention to three important issues which, I am becoming daily more convinced, are the most serious obstacles to development and growth: There is a need for the decisive confrontation of corruption, a decisive stand against sectarianism, and a decisive stand against the current infiltration of Egyptian society.

Corruption emerged and spread during a previous era. It had well-known leaders who led and organized its march. Now these leaders have disappeared and corruption has become a kind of guerrilla fighter. A look at what is happening in the property market is sufficient to convince us.

Sectarian sedition is showing its face in the only Arab country capable of maintaining internal cohesion and national unity, which are the first essentials for safeguarding any future.

There remains the question of infiltration, which is still going on in Egypt undeterred. It is being carried out sometimes in the name of scientific research and joint studies, at other times in the name of normalization and the requirements of peace, and at yet other times in the name of investment and the encouragement of foreign capital.

AL-TADAMUN: A final question: We all know that you have a firm and specific stand toward the question of peace with Israel and Egyptian-Israeli relations. The question is: Is there future peace with Israel and, if so, how?

Haykal: Frankly, I cannot imagine peace between the Arabs and Israel in either the past, the present, or the future. This is contrary to the law of nature itself.

Israel will not allow a Palestinian homeland because this in itself would be a denial of the Jewish homeland. It is one area of land between the river and the sea, and it cannot accommodate two homelands, two powers--assuming the Jewish religion is a power--and two states.

I am not the only one why says so: The Israelis themselves say it as well.

On the other hand, let us imagine the future, for example.

At the end of this century, that is in 13 years, the Arab world's population will be 250 million while Israel's will be 5 million.

Either Israel will melt into the area surrounding it--and the Israelis do not want it to melt in or even just belong to it--or, if it does not melt into or belongs to the area, the only choice left for it will be to insist on being superior to all those around it. This will be the only way for it to preserve its entity and its distinguished position among the rest.

The question is: How can 5 million people be superior to 250 million?

The solutions to this are available and ready.

First, they will terrorize and intimidate those around them, even resorting to nuclear terror.

Second, they will seek assistance from and work for foreign powers.

Third, they will prevent those 250 million people from having a real power reflecting their numerical strength. Which means blocking their right to growth and continually undermining it, lest the balances be reversed.

This is the situation as a whole, regardless of the details. But some of us delve into the details up to their ears. Details sometimes make the whole and not the only way round; tactics pull strategy, and not the other way around.

It remains to be said, however, that the impossibility of peace does not necessarily mean the outbreak of war.

HEADS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES DISCUSS ELECTION POLICY

Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 3 Mar 87 pp 1, 2

[Article by Ahmad 'Abdallah: "The Heads of the Labor [Party], the Brothers and the Liberals: We Are Cooperating on behalf of Islamic Law, Freedom and Social Justice"]

[Text] Messrs Ibrahim Shukri, chairman of the Labor Party, Muhammad Hamid Abu al-Nasr, general guide of the Moslem Brothers, and Mustafa Kamil Murad, chairman of the Liberals, stressed that the alliance that exists among the three groups is rooted in the framework of Islam and they asserted that there are many matters which they have in common and make them anxious to continue the alliance after the elections.

Mr Ibrahim Shukri said, "We assert that it is not acceptable for anyone to imagine that this combination was formed just to enter in the election campaign, so that we could get to the People's Assembly and its seats. The combination has been a continuation of the road we began together and a step toward the attainment of the hopes the people are waiting for." Ibrahim Shukri added, "The issue of the application of Islamic law lies at the head of the common program and contains support for the freedom and rights of all citizens, Moslems and Copts. God's law, in our view, includes justice in the distribution of income and services, so that we can raise the standard of living of the poor people and the weak."

"The combination we have created will, through the People's Assembly, strive for an end to the tutelage the ruling party is imposing and the termination of the privileges that are peculiar to its members at the expense of the majority of the people. We will strive to make the democracy a real one, in a manner where it will be possible for everyone to take part in issuing decisions, because democracy is not just the right of some people to watch and criticize while the right to legislate and set out policies is the monopoly of a single deficient, domineering party." On behalf of all this, as Ibrahim Shukri said, "The alliance will continue until we jointly attain the goals we have declared."

Mr Muhammad Hamid Abu al-Nasr, the general guide of the Moslem Brothers, said, "We foresee good fortune for this alliance, which has brought us

together with the Labor and Liberal Parties out of love for Islam and an undeniable desire to apply the law of Islam, to realize the good for our beloved nation and also our insistence on demanding the removal of the emergency law, the elimination of the exceptional laws, the elimination of restrictions on the formation of parties, bodies and groups, the demand for freedom of elections, nonintervention in them by pressure, terror or fraud, and the insistent demand for supervision by members of the judiciary of election procedures, to guarantee they are protected from any intervention on behalf of a specific body. We have also been brought together by our solidarity and our assertion of support for the precious unity of the nation.

"I believe that within the People's Assembly, God willing, we will cooperate firmly to realize all these goals which will preserve the people's dignity and will realize their full freedom. We have the optimum rule for determining our platform, which is to cooperate on what we have agreed upon and to reprimand one another on what we have disagreed over. By God, I ask that he cause our ties on behalf of uplifting the word of truth to succeed."

As for Mr Mustafa Kamil Murad, the chairman of the Liberal Party, he said,

"The first and basic goal which brought us together is the unity of goal and purpose for the sake of the appeal for the Islamic platform and the application of God's law, which will guarantee man his freedom, will cause him to know his rights and duties and will define for him his place on the map of the society which he belongs to in order to realize the social balance society lacks and eliminate contradictions between people's conditions and the laws which govern them and conflict with their religion.

"In the People's Assembly, the formula of cooperation will, with God's permission, be an applied form of the programs and goals we have pledged to God, and we will be anxious to implant this feeling in the spirits of the people who have given us their confidence in the context of Islamic law, which harbors all socialist, democratic and capitalist systems in its platform, style and movement."

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NATIONAL PARTY CHIEF DISCUSSES STRATEGIES, PROCEDURES

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 11 Mar 87 pp 10, 11

[Interview with National Democratic Party Secretary General Yusuf Wali by Hamid Sulayman: "How Were the National Party Candidate Lists Chosen?"]

[Text] Who chose the National Party's election candidates?

What is the truth about what being said concerning the role of the party's secretary general in these elections, the removal of some figures and the choice of new ones? How was the choice made, and what were the criteria?

Who, in particular, are the people the ruling National Party represents? How great is its influence with the Egyptian man on the street?

What is behind the charges which the opposition parties keep repeating of the falsification of the elections before they were held, and what is the goal?

What, moreover, is the truth of what is being constantly stated concerning factions and disputes within the National Party, especially over the election lists?

What is the case with respect to the current law on parties? Has the time come to amend it in the light of practice and changes in the party scene in Egypt?

In addition there were many other heated questions which AKHIR SA'AH posed to Dr Yusuf Wali, secretary general of the National Party, in a frank, open conversation on the verge of the election campaign, following the announcement of the National Party lists. Dr Yusuf Wali found no embarrassment in answering the questions raised with an equal frankness and clarity.

At the beginning, Dr Yusuf Wali, secretary general of the National Party, most frankly gave a response on the point raised concerning the method of selection of the National Party candidates, who made the choice and the bases and criteria by which this choice was made.

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"This choice was not left to a specific person, me or anyone else. The nominations came first of all from the rank and file and all the governorates, and then were submitted to the 'board of the office of the party secretariat general,' where they were discussed, in the light of the integrated data at its disposal. Then finally the nominations were submitted to his excellency President Husni Mubarak for approval.

"The party candidates this time were from two sources:

"1. Old party leaders who had become well-versed in party and parliamentary activity.

"2. Promising and rising leaders who have proved their worth in the context of party action and are embarking on the elections for the first time.

"These two groups of candidates combine the qualities of ability noted for abstract self-sacrifice, awareness of the circumstances which surround the course of national action at this stage in the regional and international context, and total adherence to the people's vital interests, in the context of what the National Party program spells out. This of necessity means that the element of continuous 'coexistence' with the masses of the people be present in those chosen to represent the party under the rotunda of parliament, in order to guarantee that the voters' confidence is won and in order to maintain the majority the party possesses."

Factions in the Party

I told him, "What is the truth about the talk going on behind the scenes concerning the existence of a general dispute between you and Dr Rif'at al-Mahjub, especially regarding the question of the formulation of lists? Is it true that each of you has a faction within the party?"

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"The fact is that affection and total understanding exist between me and Dr Rif'at al-Mahjub. The untruth of the talk of some opposition papers about disputes within the National Party can be easily revealed.

"Adversaries, in the view of one of these papers as published in one of its issues, turn into allies in the next issue, or vice versa!

"The actual situation I am experiencing is that objective dialogue is guaranteed in our party meetings and on all levels. The committees of our recent conference, for example, experienced a splendid democratic dialogue which his excellency the president himself followed. Ultimately, whatever difference occurs, we adopt the view of the majority and everyone commits himself to it.

"Therefore, 'fixed,' permanent factions within the National Party do not exist. However, such factions might perhaps appear in the course of the discussion of some issues, then soon dissolve in the context of the unity of the party and the principle of commitment, directly after the conclusion of the discussion."

[Question] While we are talking about Dr Rif'at al-Mahjub, what about the experiment of choosing an appointed member to be chairman of an elected People's Assembly, which has been the subject of great criticism? What are the justifications for this experiment, in your opinion? Has the party decided not to repeat it, in the event it wins the majority?

Dr Yusuf Wali, without abandoning his tranquil smile, said:

"The fact is that the constitution does not distinguish between elected members and appointed members as far as the rights and obligations of parliamentary practice are concerned. What was raised concerning this issue at the time was not in my opinion so much a major criticism as you mentioned in your question as a party maneuver; exaggerating, blowing up and inflating are traditional weapons which are well-known to maneuverers."

[Question] What, however, are your observations, as a member of the former People's Assembly, concerning the means for administering the "podium" of the assembly's sessions? What is the best "platform" by which we can come up with a "proper tone" between the chairman of the assembly and its members in the future?

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"In my point of view, the administration of the People's Assembly sessions in the past period most objectively helped give a chance to all views, whether of the majority or the opposition.

"The dialogue was first of all between brothers among whom joint interests existed. There is no doubt about the sincerity of their tendencies; the occurrence of differences in views or issues which are sometimes intense does not mean any harm to affection and mutual respect or any deviation from the language of dialogue which is necessary under the rotunda of parliament. With respect to the future, I am certain that the proper 'democratic tone' in the dialogue between the two parties will be a natural outcome of the development of the exercise of democracy under the rotunda of parliament, in continuation of a process which was begun on firm foundations in this respect."

The Majority Party: Why?

[Question] The way to bring "further" democracy about -- how do you imagine that will occur?

Dr Yusuf Wali replied,

"In my personal estimation, the enhancement of democratic life and expansion of the scope for engaging in it are affirmed by tying them to the realization of the interests of the masses, notwithstanding my respect for the political or juridical controversy that is being raised regarding this issue as well as some other political issues.

"I consider that to the extent that dialogue between one opinion and another offers an objective connection with the realization of national objectives

in the context of our limited resources, that will be the firm belief of the majority of the people in our country.

"Thus democratic practice grows and expands in calm conditions, without contrivance, commotion or simulation."

[Question] What is the truth of what the opposition papers are constantly stating, that the National Party does not represent a magnitude 'that constitutes any danger' with the Egyptian man on the street? What are the economic forces that the party represents? Are they forces that believe in the July revolution, that are opposed to it, domestic capitalists, proponents of liberalization, parasites, socialists, Communists, or adherents of Islam? Who exactly are they, since you are the party secretary general?

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"Quite apart from what the opposition parties keep saying in this regard, I might say, at the beginning, that if the leaders of the opposition parties believe this, they have fallen prey to a great error.

"That is because believing such talk will be negatively reflected on objective analysis of the actual state of our political life, and consequently might drive them to erroneous decisions and positions.

"In my view, an objective analysis holds that the National Democratic Party represents the majority, the majority of the Egyptian people specifically, who are committed to the middle way and to moderation by virtue of their long historic experience and condemn extremism on the left or the right. These values have always dominated the 'social intelligence' of Egyptian society, and the intellectual framework of the party and its programs have drawn inspiration from them.

"We first of all believe and stress commitment to spiritual and religious values, and indeed their effective role in building the individual and society. At the same time, we reject extremism, since it is an element that is alien to the essence of the religion and values of Egyptian society alike. Secondly, we believe that the July revolution and the October war are the most precious experiences the Egyptian people have gone through in the domestic, national and international contexts, and we thirdly stress the important role the private sector must play in various areas of our economic life and consider that its activity is 'complementary' to the role of the public sector as a buttress of our national economy and that the growth of each sector is connected to the growth and prosperity of the other. Anyone who does not want to fall prey to erroneous analysis concerning what our party represents must read my brief answer over again."

Control to the National Party

[Question] While we are talking about the National Party, it is true that this party, the legitimate grandchild of the Socialist Union, is the one that established the podiums, which later turned into opposition parties. It is true that the opposition owes its existence to the National Party.

However, the National Party seems as if it alone is acting on the stage and is exercising a kind of dominance through the law on parties. How can one grant equality of opportunity to everyone regarding the pursuit of democracy?

Dr Yusuf Wali said, with his customary calm,

"The National Party is just proud of its role in supporting the current course of democracy, apart from the historic circumstances which accompanied the emergence of the parties. However, what is said about its being alone on the stage is something which contradicts reality, unless the party's function of preserving its majority in the context of the proliferation of parties which is prevalent could be described as a kind of dominance.

"You know that the existing law has permitted the establishment of new parties, whether or not the National Party likes it."

[Question] However, there are parties whose establishment has been rejected, such as the Nasirists' party, Faraj 'Awdah's Independence Party, the Marxist party and the Islamic party.

Dr Yusuf Wali said, in continuing,

"The National Party is committed to the provision of the law on parties and only the awareness of the Egyptian people, and their intelligence and ability easily to distinguish the people they truly believe to defend their interests, support it. Moreover, the party's view regarding the establishment of a given party is not final. There are the courts. We commit ourselves to their rulings, whatever they might be.

"With respect to the material and media resources available to the party and to others besides us, which you mentioned in your question, I consider that they are equal and any fair observer can ascertain that."

The Law on Parties Is Not Sacred

[Question] On the subject of the current law on parties, do you consider that it is the best law or that it is a step along the road? Do you believe that the time has come to change it, so that it can give greater scope to the currents that have been prevented from pursuing their activity because of the restrictions of this law?

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"There is nothing in the life of man that could be said to be a final law or a final solution, except in divine books. Aside from that, amendments are of relevance. Indeed, I can tell you they are a necessity for keeping abreast of the course of development in the society in various areas and in the light of the variables which actual conditions impose and various forms of shortcomings which practice reveals. The important thing is that all take place in the context of an objective view, so that what exists may be evaluated and all the dimensions of the circumstances and variables of the society may be discovered.

"The existing law on parties guarantees this free exercise.

"In spite of my belief that all the existing political currents in our country can indeed express themselves in the framework of the existing parties, I will not permit myself to appropriate, through this view of mine, these currents' right to form independent parties. That is what the law has guaranteed, through the legitimate route which the existing parties have in fact pursued now."

The Laws of "Ill Repute"

[Question] What about the laws that have become well known under the title of "laws of ill repute?" Do you believe that they still have a need in the political and security sense to stay in effect or that they have been turned into "totems" or "sacred things" that it is difficult to touch?

Dr Wali replied,

"First of all, fairness requires that one praise the climate of freedom our country is living in now, compared with what is around us. An objective glance makes that mandatory.

"I do not imagine that I need to stress the laws' role in regulating relations between individuals and groups and preserving the interests of the society in specific circumstances.

"However, that does not rule out development. Rather, we must take it for granted that development, also, lies within the framework of the determination of higher goals and objectives. With respect to 'totems,' our society does not recognize them historically or doctrinally. However, it also knows the sources of sacred objects and respects them.

"Secular laws, of course, are not among these 'sacred objects.'"

[Question] What is your opinion on what is being asserted, even behind the scenes in the National Party itself, on the change in the circumstances which led to the need to provide 50 percent representation for workers and peasants, especially since these groups' candidates do not actually represent them and the rise in their material and moral level now gives them the ability to choose the people who can accurately express their interests? Why, in your view, isn't a decree issued abrogating this percentage, as happened, without problems, with respect to women's representation?

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"In my estimation, the two issues are different. Why?

"Because the abrogation of the women's seats occurred in the framework of the constitution. The women's percentage resulted from a law which was amended, the law on elections. Retention of the 50 percent ratio for workers and peasants is in keeping with a constitutional provision and the principles of the National Party and the other parties, which stipulate adherence

to this ratio, which the constitution has provided for objective reasons which everyone has endorsed."

The "Inevitability" of Falsification in the Elections

[Question] What is your opinion on what is being raised on the part of the opposition parties concerning the "inevitability" of falsification in all elections? What is the reason for this statement? What is the National Party's role in restoring the voters' trust?

Dr Yusuf Wali replied,

"The opposition papers are always raising that. However, what is raised in the opposition papers is one thing, and what the voters express is something else.

"The ballot boxes ultimately contain the 'true opinion' of the masses of the Egyptian people and define the dimensions of the political map in the framework of the neutral supervision by the judiciary and administrative agencies, in which the members of the people have confidence. They have made the principle of the 'sovereignty of the law' an actual fact, not just in the elections but in all areas of life.

"Concerning the stories of 'falsification' which some people circulate before the holding of elections, they are of no use in justifying a trust which is basically lacking among the people who originate them and the voting masses. Indeed, they will lead to the expansion of the gap in trust between them.

"Concerning our role in the National Party, our effort is devoted to attracting the largest possible number of voters, especially young people, to engage in political action effectively. I believe that this effort is a joint responsibility with the other parties. The National Party feels this responsibility on the basis of the complete link between engaging in politics and realizing the urgent interests of the masses rather than driving political practice to alienation and involvement in side issues. That in my view is what indeed leads to negativism and the lack of true participation."

The Party and Success and Failure

[Question] Since we have come to the role of the party, what, in your opinion, are the most important national goals the National Party has succeeded in realizing during the period of your secretariat of the party, and the goals it has failed in realizing?

Dr Wali said,

"What has been realized regarding specific points is a collective, integrated effort which cannot be attributed to the secretary of the party alone. It is also an extension of efforts which occurred previously.

"The connection between party activity and the development plans, and the problems of everyday and mass action.

"The subjection of our discussions inside the party to democratic methods and the grant of total freedom.

"The expansion of the scope for party members' participation in party activity.

"The discussion of important national issues with the opposition parties.

"The link between young people and party activity by means of productive projects such as agrarian reform, the assault on the desert and support for channels of communication among the various party formations.

"As for what I aim at supporting, in the party context, in the upcoming period, that is concentrated on:

"The holding of a constant objective dialogue with all opposition parties.

"An increase in members active in party formations, especially youth formations, and the effort further to link them to productive and service projects."

[Question] What, however, about the two suits filed by Kamal Khalid, the lawyer, concerning the unconstitutionality of the coming elections and the People's Assembly?

Dr Wali wondered, "What about them?"

[Question] I mean, what if the constitutional court rules illegality regarding the two cases? What will the position of the party and the government be?

Dr Yusuf Wali replied,

"The position of the National Party in principle is 'full respect' and commitment to carrying out everything the judiciary issues."

Combining the Two Positions

[Question] Many people consider that distributing your efforts between party and political tasks and the tasks of your job as a successful minister of agriculture has negatively affected the latter area, especially since great hopes were pinned on you for bringing about greater growth than has occurred in the area of agricultural expansion. What is your opinion?

Dr Yusuf Wali replied,

"At the outset, let me say:

"The ministry of agriculture, in any country of the world, must have a 'political view.'

"He is also a 'party man.' He cannot distance himself from the issues of agricultural development. Therefore I consider that combining the two tasks

or the two positions cannot occur at the expense of either, and vice versa. Or at least that is what I have fully felt through my own experience. Agricultural production has advanced, and is advancing, at an excellent rate, according to the plan which was set out in 1982, and is being carried out very accurately. To give proof of that, it is enough for me to tell you that in these years the population of Egypt increased about 7 million, and in spite of that our rates of imports declined while our consumption rates increased on the individual level. This is proof of the increase in our agricultural production, or state, if you wish -- proof that my combining the two positions has not been negatively reflected on this production."

[Question] On that subject, what is the truth of what is being said to the effect that you are against horizontal expansion and the assault on the desert and prefer vertical agricultural development along the waters of the Nile? What, moreover, is the truth of the conflicting statements regarding the possibility of reclaiming 5 or 6 million feddans, although I have heard personally from the minister of irrigation that the Nile water that is available now is adequate only for an expansion on the order of 200,000 feddans?

Dr Yusuf Wali answered in his capacity as minister of agriculture:

"The issue of horizontal expansion has become one of life or death as far as our country is concerned. This is a subject of agreement among all Egyptian parties. My belief in the need for it is total. As to the statements you have mentioned, I can tell you that the areas that will be available for reclamation up to 2005 are just 2.3 million feddans. This figure is defined in the light of the water resources of the Nile and the groundwater that is added to them. This is from the statistics of the Ministry of Irrigation, whose word it is considered defines the scope for expansion in the future."

What Would You Choose?

[Question] It remains for us to ask you, after this long career in the university and in the political ministerial and party field, if you were given the chance to choose, would this choice fall on:

Party action only?

The full time pursuit of agriculture, on grounds that it is the solution and salvation?

Or a return to the university, to prepare a generation which will realize dreams for Egypt which it is out of the question to realize now?

Dr Yusuf Wali said,

"As I stated before, there is no contradiction between ministerial work in agriculture and my party activity. In addition, political activity gives me the chance to prepare future generations, which will bear the responsibility of the future. That does not of course detract from what the universities are doing in this area and I consider that working in them is expressive of

an enjoyable period which is not to be forgotten by someone who has engaged in it, like me."

[Question] Finally, I would like to ascertain your view regarding the opinion which holds:

"Politics sometimes exhausts the world's innocence, ruins the thinker's freedom and destroys the dignity of a 'saint.'"

Dr Yusuf Wali replied with an unblemished smile,

"This view is relatively correct.

"However, it is also true that the world can preserve its innocence, the thinker his freedom and also the saint his dignity, whatever the dimensions of political practice might be. The matter ultimately is related to the strength of will."

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COPTIC LEADER BACKS RELIGIOUS UNITY CALL

PM261501 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 21 Mar 87 p 3

[Article by (Coptic intellectual) Dr Milad Hanna: "A Solution Can Be Found Through Dialogue and Popular Initiative, not Through the Central Security Forces"]

[Excerpts] Mr 'Adil Husayn, chief editor of AL-SHA'B and an old friend of mine since the 1960's, has contacted me for my comment on Dr Muhammad Salim al-'Awwa's article and proposals on tackling the problem of sectarian sedition through dialogue among all parties concerned and then through the popular initiative of all national and religious forces. His excellency has warned against limiting the solution to police methods and security measures.

Foreign journalists often ask me: Could what happened in Lebanon happen in Egypt?...I have always stressed that Egypt is not Lebanon and that Egypt will never be Lebanized.

Arab journalists often ask me: Could what happened in Iran be repeated in Egypt?...I have always stressed that Egypt with its history and heritage is different from Iran and that Egypt will not be transformed into an Iran.

Christian heritage teaches us that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," and Islamic heritage also teaches us that "sedition is worse than murder." So we all realize that we must live together in one homeland and under one constitution with common laws.

Article 1, Clause 2 of the Egyptian constitution stipulates that "Islam is the state religion, Arabic is its official language, and the principles of the Islamic Shari'ah are the main source of legislation."

I harbor no sensitivities toward the Islamic Shari'ah's being the major source of legislation because it has been so throughout many centuries of the Egyptian history. The Copts accepted, by virtue of the fabric of one bond, that there should be one law for all people in Egypt except for the personal statute laws (which concern marriage and divorce).

Probably the main difference emerges when it comes to criminal and penal legislation. But the difference here is not between Copts and Muslims, since a substantial group of Egyptians, both Copts and Muslims, see that the application of this legislation through Islamic standards of punishment might not suit the requirements of this age and that stipulations in this regard should be eliminated, as in the case of those governing wars, the distribution of booty, and the treatment and release of slaves.

Egypt has been exposed to many storms of sectarian sedition in the past, the most recent being the tragedy of al-Zawiyah al-Hamra' in 1981. But God safeguarded Egypt, which returned to peacefulness. It is unreasonable to allow the prevailing situation to force us into something we would not like on the grounds that "it might not be so safe every time" [Arabic saying], because we cannot imagine that Egypt is naturally protected against sectarian sedition as if it possessed a magical vaccination. In fact the task of preserving the Egyptian people's unity has become more difficult, especially during recent times, because the Lebanese civil war has escalated and chaos has been widespread. This war is still escalating daily, even though it has been going on for more than 10 years. The Iran-Iraq war is also escalating since the revelation that Israel and the United States are supplying Iran with arms so that the war can continue to serve imperialist plots aimed at dragging some other states from the region into the swamp of sectarianism and fragmentation.

Israel signed the Camp David treaty, but Israel is now convinced that the Egyptian people reject it. So the cool conflict could, without warning, turn into a hot conflict with unpredictable consequences.

So we can sense that there are those who plot against Egypt in order to expose it to seditious storms from time to time. We can also sense that the unity of the national forces is essential in order to confront these storms which have emerged recently and will, it seems, continue to emerge from time to time through the end of the century.

I would end this statement by supporting the pivotal idea presented by dear brother Dr Muhammad Salim al-'Awwa: "The unity of national and religious forces must therefore now take a direct, immediate, and practical line; in the villages, cities, and districts there must be purely popular committees that do not include any official or government elements; their task is to firmly establish the spirit of human brotherhood among all Egyptians and then to protect places of worship and religious holy places from any attacks aimed at harming their security or exposing them to danger."

This practical proposal echoes inside me and proves that we share the same feeling. In fact I presented a similar proposal in 1980 and in similar circumstances in my book "Copts Yes, But Egyptians Too," because I believe that only Egyptians themselves are capable of protecting their own unity and that no foreign powers will be able to play around unless they find support and sympathy among us.

Please allow me, as an engineer described as realistic, to add the following to my support of the proposal in question:

1. As all parties have taken joint action in the past, the Egyptian parties, with the NDP in the forefront, are invited to begin forming a general committee from all parties and national forces and public figures in order to preserve national unity. This task has to be among, indeed in the forefront of the committee's concerns during and after the election campaign.
2. This general committee and subcommittees in provinces and villages should include all honorable elements acceptable to citizens, regardless of party affiliation, because this is a national problem that concerns the whole homeland and is therefore above parties. We will find within every village a group of ordinary Egyptians who care for national unity and who are respected by all factions and parties.
3. Egypt's Copts are to make a move to stop all negative attitudes, especially since the initiative is now coming from the Islamic trend in Egypt in what is in fact a warm gesture that history will record.
4. The government has to concentrate its efforts on raising the level of enlightenment through the media: through radio and television. This is in addition to the educators and universities paying attention to spreading, developing, promoting the spirit of national unity.
5. Clear plans have to be laid down to solve the people's daily problems, to confront high living costs and the problem of housing which is crumbling but still occupied, and to solve the transport problem. It should also be specified that these problems will be solved within a reasonable period of time. This sort of atmosphere created through democratic dialogue is the way to eliminate the concerns of the young, so that they will feel secure about their future and, consequently, accept the political, national, and social enlightenment campaigns.

Achieving gains and victories in the field of national unity is no easy matter. It requires patience and unity of all national forces that love Egypt.

"May God spare Egypt misfortune and protect it from all harm."

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EGYPT

AL-AHRAN REJECTS 'KHOMEYNITE' CHARGE

PM031511 Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 30 Mar 87 p 2

[Untitled article by Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ghawabi under the rubric "Our Egypt"]

[Excerpts] Our Egypt! Our talk today is about electoral honesty: the promises, pledges, and commitments a candidate makes to the citizens of his constituency and the honesty in his electoral campaign.

In your interest, Egypt, I would say that the statements being made by some ignoramuses among NDP members, especially senior candidates, are nothing but lies, deceit, and hypocrisy, because they accuse those on the Islamic alliance lists of being Khomeynites.

Therefore, I say that the false accusations of these leaders are mere tactics which we totally reject. If anything, these false accusations prove a low level of morality, lack of conscience, and concern only for personal gain rather than an interest in our homeland and fellow citizens.

The Islamic trend reforms morality and strengthens faith in the heart and, consequently, the conscience is awakened and straightened out and selfishness is eliminated in accordance with the saying of the prophet, God's peace be upon him: Wish your Muslim brother what you wish yourself. Bribes, stealing of public funds, and all kinds of theft will thus be eliminated.

I would now like to discuss some basic points with regard to the NDP members claim that an Islamic state means a "Khomeynite" state that will erect gallows for the people. I would say that they are scandalously ignorant of their country's situation. How can they, with this backward mentality and ignorance of their creed, be in charge of a state!

The Egyptian state adopts true Islam and follows the Sunnah of Muhammad, peace be upon him. Here, in our Egypt, we are people of the Sunnah, and there is not a single Khomeyni among us. In fact everyone follows the path of God's messenger, peace be upon him, in accordance with noble messenger's saying: I have left something for you, and if you adhere to it you will never go astray: God's book and my Sunnah.

We, in our Egypt, pursue true Islam, the religion revealed through Gabriel, peace be upon him, to our great prophet Muhammad Ibn-'Abdallah, peace be upon him; Islam with which the prophet and the caliphs after him ruled the nation and achieved great conquests, expanding the Islamic nation and, consequently, spreading the word of God through the beacon of Islam throughout the East and the West of the Earth. The word of God was spoken and the divine justice prevailed in all parts of the world. Let us recall the saying of Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq [the successor of the prophet], may God reward him: I have been chosen to rule you but I am not superior to you; if I do right, support; if I do wrong, correct me. The strong among you be weak until I see that justice prevails; the weak among you be strong until I restore their rights.

Therefore, I would say to whoever is opposing the Islamic trend and accusing it of being Khomeynite: You have been lying to God. For us God is sufficient and he is the best to help us [Koranic verse]. We entrust our affairs to God for he is the best to protect and support us. May God protect you, our Egypt, from the evil of these people and may God always be with you, our Egypt.

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AL-AZHAR SHAYK INTERVIEWED ON SECTARIANISM

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[Interview with Jad-al-Haqq 'ali Jad-al-Haqq, grand shaykh of al-Azhar, by Muhammad al-Disuqi Muhammad in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] Certain Egyptian provinces recently witnessed grave unrest and disturbances because of various sectarian incidents which caused injuries and losses to individuals. The Egyptian public is warily wondering what the repercussions of the incidents could be, aware that the perpetrators are aiming to undermine Egyptian society. AL-MAJALLAH's correspondent in Cairo met with Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq and had the following interview with him.

[Mahmud] Although several days have passed since the outbreak of seditious sectarian incidents in Sawhaj, Bani Suwayf, Asyut, and Kafr al-Shaykh, the quarters concerned in Egypt have not disclosed the nature of the recent incidents, the motive behind them, and the identity of the perpetrators. What is your comment on this matter?

[Jal-al-Haqq] There is no doubt that world colonialism has hidden tentacles that from time to time are stretched out in order to tamper with the Islamic people's destinies with the aim of weakening them, harming them, and exploiting their resources. Those hidden tentacles operate through various means, foremost among them an intellectual invasion aimed at diluting the Islamic character and undermining Muslim societies from within, through the agency of Muslims, by kindling the fire of sectarian sedition, probably by fanning bigotry and fanaticism among the citizens. These incidents are the result of hostile plans which our adversaries are endeavoring to use against our societies out of spite. They are in fact foreign and alien incidents; they in no way emanate from us or our citizens.

[Mahmud] If we assume that the seditious sectarian incidents that broke out are the work of world colonialism, then this means that we still want to pin the blame on others and avoid facing our own mistakes. Is this now so?

[Jal-al-Haqq] I would repeat that the seditious sectarian incidents that took place in certain upper Egypt provinces are most probably imported into Egyptian society, although some of them may have been on the spur of the

moment, namely, prompted by the elections. Some individuals wrongly believe that by committing certain provocative actions--individual actions that do not deserve to be described as sectarian sedition--they would gain something during the elections. All Egyptians, Muslims and Christians, deal with one another in ordinary life as equals. Each holds his religious beliefs and performs the duties of his religion without interference by anybody. What happened was only individual incidents, bearing in mind that the election conditions may lead some people to the mistaken belief that they can gain something from these regrettable incidents.

[Mahmud] Does this mean that the incidents are aimed against the Islamic trend that is likely to enter elections?

[Jal-al-Haqq] I do not think that they are directed against the Islamic trend, although I believe that the incidents have been fabricated in order to wreck the election battle and give it an image that would harm Egyptian society.

[Mahmud] Who in your view is planning to wreck the elections?

[Jal-al-Haqq] I have called on the parties concerned to search and investigate so as to find out the truth and the motives behind these incidents and to expose the hands behind them in order to arrest the culprits, and also acquaint the public--both Muslims and Christians--with the real objectives and ulterior motives of these people so that they will be wary of them.

[Mahmud] It is said that the holy al-Azhar always acts after the event, in other words too late. Which means that its role in the nation's life is nonexistent. Do you agree with this saying?

[Jal-al-Haqq] First, I would like to make it clear that al-Azhar always does its duty in enlightening the public and warning it of sedition, which I am sure is imported into Egypt. As soon as it was announced that sectarian incidents had taken place in some upper Egyptian cities an al-Azhar delegation consisting of the minister of Awqaf, the mufti of Egypt, and a large number of al-Azhar 'ulama' went to Sawhaj. They did their duty there of removing the effects of what happened. The al-Azhar 'ulama' are still carrying out their duties of explaining facts to the people and warning them against the threat of dangers, which always begin with the spread of rumors whose sources aim to undermine the integrity of Egyptian society.

[Mahmud] It is said that the recent incidents were the inevitable result of 'ulama' turning away from young communities which are in dire need of their efforts. Is this true?

[Jal-al-Haqq] This is not true because 'ulama' in Egypt perform their duties in the best possible way. They are present in all Egyptian towns, villages, and hamlets. Reality refutes these allegations. The loyalty of the Muslim 'ulama' is to God alone. They uphold Islam, justice, and the interest of the nation and the homeland. The allegations that some people have spread about the Muslim 'ulema' have no foundation and have nothing to do with the

truth. Maybe those who indulge in inflammatory writings will become aware of the danger surrounding us all and therefore reconsider what they write and what they seek to achieve.

[Mahmud] You have underlined the role of Islamic preachers. But their number shows that there is a great need for more of them, particularly when you realize that there are over 50,000 mosques in Egypt but no more than 4,000 Islamic preachers in Egypt. Does this not affect the progress of the call to Islam?

[Jal-al-Haqq] In fact, the number of Islamic preachers is no longer keeping abreast of the size of the population in Egypt and the number of mosques. We are making efforts to enhance the propagation of Islam in every possible way, particularly by increasing the number of Islamic preachers. Not only this, but we also hold several training courses which 'ulama' and Islamic preachers attend to learn about new and modern public relations methods. Al-Azhar 'ulama' and tutors at al-Azhar institutes play a major role in supporting the call to belief in God and enlightening Muslim youth. I believe that the future will bring much that is good in this field.

[Mahmud] Enemies of the Islamic Shari'ah have taken the recent incidents as an indication of the refusal of the Egyptian people to abide by the Shari'ah laws. Nobody has tried to refute these allegations. What is your comment in this regard?

[Jal-al-Haqq] This too is untrue, particularly as we know that there is no disagreement in Egypt on the need to apply the Islamic Shari'ah, adopt the precepts of religion, and go back to the religion's magnanimous sources. Draft Islamic laws are prepared and ready to be implemented. What is important is that they find their way into the people's life in various spheres. Needless to say, as even Islam's opponents, let alone its proponents, would admit, the magnanimous religion insists on respecting houses of worship and calls for good-neighboringness and good relations between Muslims and followers of other divine religions.

[Mahmud] You used the word "extremism" when a group of young men seeming to adopt somewhat a hardline attitude first appeared. The term was then used to accuse others of the same thing. Al-Azhar did not come forward to clarify concepts. What is the truth?

[Jal-al-Haqq] The undeniable fact is that there is no extremism in Islam. The matter is only a misunderstanding of religion. If some Muslims become carried away by their enthusiasm for religion, we call on them to adhere to Islam's magnanimity. I am afraid that some people may use those individual incidents as a weapon to brandish in the face of those who advocate the adoption of Islamic laws. Islam calls for good-neighboringness, compassion, cooperation, and solidarity. Our life has become complex under the imported systems, so I can see no way out except via Islam and its laws.

[Mahmud] For whom will the shaykh of al-Azhar vote in the coming parliamentary elections?

[Jal-al-Haqq] I will give my note to the true and loyal deputy who works for the implementation of God's Shari'ah at home, in the street, in his country, and in his state, as well as in all spheres of life.

/6662

CSO: 4500/80

COMMENTARY URGES CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS

NC051719 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1240 GMT 5 Apr 87

[Bahiyy al-Din Shu'ayb commentary: "Tomorrow Is the Day of the People"]

[Excerpts] Tomorrow, 6 April, is truly a day for Egyptian democracy. In other words, it is the day of the people who have struggled to establish the free and honorable principles of democracy. Every day of celebration has its own rituals. The rituals associated with this day make it incumbent upon every citizen to practice his electoral right with all seriousness, positivity, and objectivity. It is the duty of every free citizen who has faith in his country and who is struggling to develop it and make it prosperous to go to voting stations tomorrow and elect the members of the People's Assembly. Tomorrow is especially significant because it represents a starting point for the future. The right start will lead to the desired goal.

Throughout the last few weeks, the public has been listening to the electoral programs of the various parties, as well as those being espoused by individual candidates. They have listened to eloquent speeches and splendid slogans. Each candidate has spoken about aspirations. Each party has claimed to be the savior and the hope of the country. Each independent candidate has said that he is the man of the age and the creator of miracles.

Amid this overabundant flow of promises and dreams, the people have been quietly observing, balancing the odds, and secretly holding in disdain the illusions of the past which talked about socialism and sacred oaths to preserve the gains of the public. We must emphasize here that the commotion taking place in the political arena, as exemplified by the numerous electoral demonstrations, did not distract the citizen or make him lose his senses. The citizen stood as an observer, watching rivals of the past, who used to talk with knives, now ally in a political deal which gathers all religious and materialistic contradictions together in one basket. He is not fooled by all this, for the destiny of the homeland is tied to him. This destiny is not a commodity that can be displayed for sale in the marketplace of political one-upmanship.

The Egyptian citizen is mature. He knows his way and his interests. With his heightened political sense, which has been polished by time, the citizen

is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, between the viable and the impossible, between the true and the false, and between those who speak sincerely and those who propagate lies.

The battle now facing the Egyptian citizen is the fight to defend the present and the future, the fight to protect the gains for which he sacrificed his livelihood and gave his sweat. To ensure that what he has gained is preserved, the citizen is not ready to embark on an unknown path in pursuit of mysterious dreams which address him in a language that he does not understand. He will only feel reassured about the future if these assurances come from those with whom he has lived, from those who have been responsible for making the policies that shape his present and build his future.

There is no doubt that every citizen's commitment to his electoral duty and the choice that he will make with his own free will is a testimony to this honorable national record throughout the ages.

We must not forget to draw attention to the fact that this electoral battle is not Egypt's battle alone. It is a battle for all the Arabs. The Arab people in various parts of the Arab nation are following this battle closely in order to learn from it. Every Arab citizen will gain a new experience from the stand adopted by the Egyptian citizen, as well as from the various aspects of the Egyptian electoral battle itself. This experience will be available to draw upon in his defense of democracy.

Sons of Egypt. Tomorrow is your day. Preserve its stability and tranquillity in order to make yourself worthy of this honor. The world will record every step that you take. March forward.

/6662

CSO: 4500/80

EGYPT

BRIEFS

ISRAEL: ADDITIONAL U.S. FORCE IN TABAH--['Abd-al-Nabi 'Abd-al-Sattar report: "Israel Requests Increasing Number of Americans in Tabah To Confront Fedayeen and Arms Infiltration"] AL-WAFD has learned from well-informed political sources that the Israeli authorities recently asked the U.S. Administration to increase from 10 to 22 the number of U.S. forces personnel who form part of the multinational force in Tabah. The Israeli authorities gave the excuse of the need to tighten control on the Egyptian-Israeli borders after investigations by the Israeli authorities established that elements of Palestinian fegaye'en had infiltrated through the disputed Tabah area. These elements carried out military operations against Israeli installations and citizens. The investigations also showed that large quantities of arms and light military equipment smuggled with the help of some bedouins were used in these operations. Prior to withdrawing its military forces from Tabah Israel imposed on Egypt the condition that the multinational force that would replace the Israeli forces should consist only of Americans. [Text] [Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 30 Mar 87 p 1] /6662

CSO: 4500/80

TUNISIA

MABROUK APPEALS FOR SUPPORT FOR IRAQ

LD290008 Kuwait KUNA in English 1352 GMT 28 Mar 87

[Text] Baghdad, March 28 (KUNA)--Tunisian Foreign Minister Hedi Mabrouk Saturday called on the public opinion and the world to press on Iran to stop its war against Iraq because "the Iraqi cause is a just question that calls for world's support of the Iraqi stance."

In a statement to daily, AL-JUMHURIYAH, Mabrouk condemned Iranian rulers' insistence to continue the war against the Arab country, adding the Iranian stance is "disastrous" for Islamic world.

He said the Iranian insistence on the continuation of the war is a major part of the difficult and dangerous conditions that are facing the Arab nation.

The Arab official said the Arab countries are required to support Iraq against Iran, noting Arab solidarity is the successful start to remedy any Arab problem. He said Arab solidarity is required to face the Iraq-Iran six and a half year old war.

Mabrouk noted that the secret American arms deal to Iran has revealed the Iranian's contradiction of stances. He elaborated "Iran announces it seeks liberation of Jerusalem while on the other side it gets arms from the Zionists."

"The Iranian rulers' cooperation with the Zionists contradicts with the Islamic values," Mabrouk stressed.

He strongly called for holding an Arab summit, saying Tunisia welcomes such a meeting so that to confront problems and dangers facing the Arab world.

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CSO: 4500/81

TUNISIA

COOPERATION WITH OMAN REVIEWED, EXTOLLED

Muscat 'UMAN in Arabic 15 Mar 87 pp 1, 12

[Article: "Cooperation between the Sultanate and Tunisia Is Ideal and Is Constantly Growing; Tunisian Efforts Are Meeting with Support on Behalf of a Rapprochement among the Countries of the Maghreb"]

[Text] His Excellency Hedi Mabrouk, the Tunisian foreign minister, stressed that cooperation between the sultanate and Tunisia is ideal and constantly growing. His excellency said, in a statement to 'UMAN, that the joint Omani-Tunisian committee will hold its meetings for the first time soon.

His excellency expressed his wonderment at the Gulf Cooperation Council, saying, "The leaders of the Cooperation Council countries have reconciled requirements which are still causing differences among others, not bringing people together. On my visit to the council countries, I sensed that every government is concerned over its country's development, anxious about its interests and jealous of its identity, but in spite of that there is a profound feeling that each of them in isolation cannot confront the challenges and circumstances of the century. Here the genius of the community along with the preservation of particular characteristics stands out, and that is the valuable essence we are trying to benefit from; in spite of the difference in circumstances between the Gulf area and the Maghreb, this does not deprive one of a benefit which we could call a useful contagion."

Concerning Tunisian-Arab Gulf relations, he said, "We are wholly content with our relations with the Gulf countries, and there are no blemishes in these relations. The various features of cooperation with these numerous countries are technical, financial, commercial, economic and of course political. We unquestionably aspire further to strengthen the pace of cooperation, aspire to have integration assume more fully realized dimensions and aspire to overcome some of the difficulties which arise, as is natural, from time to time in certain organizations of cooperation."

He added, "We are not ignorant of and do not ignore natural obstacles such as geographic distance and its effect on trade, and we are not ignorant of the difficulties to which the Gulf is exposed, which might limit its chances for investment here, but we aspire to have the integrity and fraternity that bring us together reduce these obstacles and difficulties."

On a question on Tunisia's role in bringing the countries of the Maghreb closer together, he said, "Tunisia is striving to be the factor that brings people closer and calms people's minds, and, if the situation requires, the good link which still exists among brothers when needed. It is not easy to talk about the stage that efforts have reached, because success is contingent on not venturing excessively into details. However, you can know that Tunisia is receiving support from various parties in this process in the service of the Maghreb."

Concerning the perspectives for a resolution to the Western Sahara crisis, he said, "Every problem in the region is negatively reflected on the structure of the Maghreb which we are hoping for. Problems are not wanting in our region, but the most important thing is the will for coexistence and the determination to make what is most permanent prevail. It seems to me that that exists, and that is what makes us more optimistic about overcoming difficulties."

Concerning the conditions in Lebanon, he said, "I believe that the Lebanese crisis arises from the proliferation of analysts who deal with influential persons through their resources in accordance with their analyses, and these analyses are contradictory and produce only contradictions."

On the international peace conference in the Middle East and expectations that it will convene this year, Hedi Mabrouk said: "The international peace conference nowadays is receiving increasing support. The latest declaration by the European group is the greatest proof of this support. Indeed, some of the most prominent members of the Israeli coalition government are declaring their support for it, although here it is necessary to be cautious because these people make a show of declaring their support on the one hand and on the other deny the Palestine Liberation Organization its right to represent its people, who recognize it as their sole legitimate representative."

He added, "The obstacles on the road to the holding of the conference still are relatively numerous, in spite of the encouraging early signs."

On the Iraqi-Iranian war, his excellency asserted: "This war is a disaster. The important, pressing thing is to stop the fighting and not waste time determining the basic responsibility. It will be possible to return to that matter later. The important thing now is to stop the war and hold onto the remaining material and human resources that are exposed to eradication. It is not possible for any country to impose its regime on any other country and choose the officials who will be in charge of that government. This is a position on which we are not in agreement with Iran and it is an unacceptable condition. However, it will be possible, after that, to look into the determination of responsibilities and compensation, and this is not a position that is hostile or in opposition to Iran."

He went on to assert, "It is possible to turn to the United Nations and the International Security Council and support the efforts of De Cuellar, who has standing in both Baghdad and Tehran. As to the Tunisian role, that lies within the framework of the activity of the Arab League's seven-party committee."

TUNISIA

POSSIBILITY OF CABINET CHANGES VIEWED

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 2 Mar 87 pp 22-23

[Article by al-Salami al-Hasani: "The New Leading Figures and the 'Succession Mill'"]

[Text] The possibilities of a cabinet change are a frequently discussed subject in political salons in Tunisia. Some believe a complete change in the Tunisian structure can be expected on the ground that Rachid Sfar, the prime minister, is merely a transitional head of government. Some go so far as to say that President Habib Bourguiba made the decision for a cabinet change upon returning from his visit to Paris and will announce this decision at the appropriate time.

This "someone" has named Hedi Mabrouk, the current foreign minister, as a candidate to head the new government. Some people have also spoken about a decision President Bourguiba may have made about a constitutional amendment to provide for the creation of the office of vice-president, which would fall to the lot of Bourguiba, Jr.

At a time when these possibilities are being discussed and have also begun to be circulated abroad, interest within government and opposition circles is concentrating on three main focuses: the attempts that have been made to solve the trade union problem, implementation of the new decision requiring opposition party participation in the Economic and Social Council, and the social dimensions of the economic reforms being undertaken by the government of Rachid Sfar.

Results First

In fact, rumors of a possible government change have been denied several times by official circles, which affirm that Rachid Sfar's government was formed to implement a definite economic program and that this government cannot be changed before the results of this program become evident, because the present government will be called to account before the president on the basis of results. What is clear in Tunisia today is that the subject of [Bourguiba's] successor has disappeared from general interest, perhaps as a result of the previous experience, which no official desires to repeat, or perhaps because the economic situation has become so critical that it forces people to worry

above all else about improving it within a definite time frame and to leave the succession question as it is established in the constitution--i.e., to consider it a settled matter and not one that can be reopened at the present time. It is to be noticed that Rachid Sfar, the current prime minister and the candidate to succeed President Bourguiba according to the constitution, has never spoken about or alluded to the subject of the succession--as if the subject were of no interest to him. Some have explained this position as meaning that the man does not want to focus light on himself; others explain it as meaning that the man does not intend to bear the responsibility of succeeding [Bourguiba], or at least does not intend to throw himself into this kind of premature battle, lest he, like his predecessors, become its victim. It is certain, however, that the avoidance of the subject of the succession is due above all to a decision by President Bourguiba himself, who discovered, before dismissing former Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali, that the succession question had created power centers struggling with each other behind the scenes around Carthage Palace and had caused the government and its agencies to take an interest only in the subject of the succession, leaving the condition of the country to proceed without control or plans for the future.

There is no doubt that Mohamed Mzali's fall, although there are other reasons, can be traced to one principal reason: he hurried matters by considering himself the expected and undisputed successor to the president and began to behave as such. Similarly, the fall of Tunisia's first lady and her departure from Carthage Palace and subsequent divorce from Bourguiba can be traced to her having interfered more than was appropriate--in the opinion of Bourguiba--in the succession question. As everyone knows, Wassila Ben Ammar, the president's former wife, supported the concept of general elections immediately after the president's departure and opposed the idea of giving the succession to the prime minister. She drew support in the matter from the Algerian pattern, which was successfully implemented after the death of President Houari Boumedienne, who was succeeded for 40 days by the president of the parliament, after which general elections were held to designate a new president.

Number-Two Man

With the fall of Wassila Ben Ammar and Mohamed Mzali by decree of President Bourguiba, all the former power centers around them fell, and a new pattern of power centers formed in the country. Tunisia today, unlike many countries of the Third World, has no number-two man at the summit of power after Bourguiba. Instead, there are a group of leading figures surrounding Bourguiba. Prime Minister Rachid Sfar, who according to the constitution occupies the place of the man second in authority, does not appear--and perhaps does not want to appear--to be the second man in the government in practical terms. There are many indications of this. Although he holds the office of general secretary of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party, one notices that he has left the overwhelming share of party activity to the party leader, Hedi Baccouche. While Rachid Sfar serves as head of the government and therefore supervises all government activities, we find that he never interferes in foreign policy, which is outlined by Bourguiba and implemented by Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Rachid Sfar seems more like a "superminister" or a top-level minister of economy, finance, and administration. There is no doubt that this is not

because the man has been forced to be this; rather, it is because he does not want to enter the succession struggle by putting himself forward as the number-two man in the state, for he knows that the "succession mill" destroys whoever tries to ride it.

Group of Leading Figures

In this situation, a group of leading figures has formed at the summit of power and around Bourguiba. Until now, this group takes the form of centers of activity, rather than centers of competing and conflicting personalities. But how long will the situation remain as it is now? This question may be what has made some people try to anticipate events and talk about a possible cabinet change in Tunisia or even about a change in the government structure. However, as long as these leading figures work according to the horizons outlined by Bourguiba for the present period and according to the pattern he has laid down, such a change does not appear possible. But what do these leading personalities represent? Here one must point out that these leading figures are all equal in importance, in spite of the difference existing between them on the legal or constitutional level. There is, first of all, the prime minister, Rachid Sfar. He is the first head of government in Tunisia who is not from the city of Monastir or its suburbs. He is from Mahdia, the capital of the Fatimids. When the decision appointing Sfar head of government was made public, some even said that history may be repeating itself, with the succession or "caliphate" moving to Mahdia, as happened in the time of the Fatimids. Also, he is the son of one of the Destourian Party leaders in the period of the nationalist movement who, together with Bourguiba, formed the party's first executive bureau after having left the old party. Finally, he is known for integrity and seriousness and for being a specialist in the field of economics, having graduated from the (Ecole Superior des Impots) in France. To date, he seems to have no other ambitions than working in the government and implementing the economic program. On economic matters he speaks at length; about political subjects he speaks very briefly. He does not seem to be striving now to be the number-two man in the state, even though the constitution grants him these powers. He does not interfere in matters of foreign policy, or in the interior ministry, or in the administration of the party.

The second leading figure is Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, minister of the interior and at the same time director of national security. He is a military general who graduated from a military college in the United States and is an expert in explosives. He is known more as a technician than as a politician. He was put into the party's political bureau without his having a desire to be in it. According to the testimony of Mohamed Mzali after he left the government, Ben Ali works more than 20 hours a day--until he is dizzy. He does not hesitate to take part in security campaigns personally and to go into the field like any soldier. He meets President Bourguiba every morning to present his daily report and learn the presidential directives. Like Rachid Sfar, he does not appear to have political ambitions. He is not interested in the subject of the succession, except insofar as it is a question in which others take an interest. He is from Hammam Sousse, an area close to Monastir, and is therefore affiliated with the same city as party leader Hedi Baccouche.

Another leading figure is Hedi Baccouche, leader of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party. He is a man who has known the party in most of its stages and has thus experienced all the problems witnessed by previous periods. He was imprisoned with Ahmed Ben Salah, the former minister of economy. Afterwards, although he did not break his connection with the party, he remained obscure until he was appointed ambassador to Algeria. He is said to have been one of those who actively participated in promoting Tunisian-Algerian relations, climaxed by the signing of the treaty of brotherhood and concord. Hedi Baccouche, however, differs from Rachid Sfar and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in that he is a more professional politician than they. He wants to restore the party to what it was in his youth, when it dominated the mass organizations and when it had the final say about matters great and small, and he wants to return party activists to the former level of belief and activism. Some people accuse him of being too idealistic. His friends, however, say that he is merely an activist. In any case, he does not hesitate to say that Bourguiba's successor will be Bourguiba's party and that the only guarantee for the continuance of Bourguibaism is that Bourguiba's party retain its power, dynamism, and leadership of the country. The first thing Hedi Baccouche did upon assuming party leadership was to mobilize talents for the party even from within the opposition, the trade unionists, and the left.

The other leading figure is Hedi Mabrouk, the foreign minister. He is from Monastir and from the capital at the same time. Perhaps it is for this reason that some people are quick to nominate him to succeed Rachid Sfar at the head of the government, and consequently to succeed Bourguiba. Perhaps it is also for this reason that former Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali considers him to have been the one man who stood behind his removal. In fact, however, Hedi Mabrouk lives under the shadow of Bourguiba and does not hesitate to tell anyone who mentions the subject of the succession in his presence that he will abandon any political activity after Bourguiba. During his 13 years as Tunisian ambassador in Paris, he gained experience in dealing with the press and experience of the importance of showing tolerance to other political currents. Because he belongs to an older generation, he does not work behind the scenes with the impatience of those who want to hurry matters. Since taking over the foreign ministry, he has not stayed in Tunis more than a week without interruption. He makes frequent trips from capital to capital to explain Tunisian foreign policy and to unite friends to help the country in its economic ordeal. His view of foreign policy is embodied in three circles: first, the circle of the Arab West; second, the Arab-Islamic circle; and third, the international circle. Some people accuse him of being France's greatest friend in Tunisia. However, his friends say that he is one of the men most committed to Bourguiba's foreign policy. Finally, Hedi Mabrouk is considered in many circles to be one of the most likely candidates for the leadership of the government because he is the only prominent figure who is affiliated with the city of Monastir. But does this factor suffice by itself?

In general, the pattern of balances that Bourguiba has established in order to do away with the power centers struggling with each other over the succession appears thus far to be the pattern for the present stage. However, it carries with it many unknown factors. Foremost among these is the extent to which Rachid Sfar's government will succeed in achieving clear results in its program of economic reform. Then there is the extent to which harmony will

continue between these leading figures surrounding President Bourguiba. Finally, those who do not know that Bourguiba has always remained opposed to the emergence of any man second in authority to constitute by himself a center of alignment throw themselves into the "mill of succession." The only center of alignment remains Bourguiba; whoever violates this principle within the pyramid of authority, loses his political future.

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CSO: 4504/179

TUNISIA

INFORMATION MINISTER DISCUSSES DOMESTIC PRESS ISSUES

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 13 Mar 87 pp 34, 35

[Interview with Information Minister Abderrazzak Kefi by 'Afaf Zayn: "There Can Be No Arab Solidarity without a Unified Media Charter"]

[Text] A thorough, frank conversation with the Tunisian information minister Abderrazzak Kefi dealt with the phenomenon of the spread of the yellow press and its dominance of Arab journalists' performance in general.

Two years had passed between my first meeting with the Tunisian minister of information and this one. In the course of them, Abderrazzak Kefi has been concerned with establishing a great project that had been brought up in his mind, which was to set out clear foundations for an Arab information charter which would know how to control the crushing chaos in the Arab journalistic sector, as the Tunisian minister said, and encourage journalists to take proper information and set aside what people's tongues were passing on at gatherings in cafes and limited entertainment sessions.

In spite of the touch of rebuke I noted in the tone of voice of the Tunisian official who allows the entry of about 400 publications into Tunisia a week, the Tunisian official expressed insistence and concern on continuing with his media plan, which is to open Tunisia's doors to Arab and foreign journalists, alongside the ministry's movement in the direction of implanting the rules which protect Tunisia's security and safety from everything that comes from abroad in the form of various articles written by writers who do not know how to differentiate between public and private affairs or between the truth and the opposite and what is said and what is not said.

Abderrazzak Kefi is at the same time proud of writers in the upright press who are aware of the ethics and conduct of the profession. He is one of the distinguished persons who are known for their stability and loyalty to Tunisia and Bourguibism, regardless of the change in cabinets and the changes the political system has been noticing in light of the requirements of the period and the public interest. Here is the text of the conversation:

AL-HAWADITH: The recent developments Tunisia has witnessed in the domestic and foreign contexts have been conveyed to the Arab reader in a manner which

have caused him to succumb to confusion about what is true and what is fabricated. As a minister of information who is proud of the margin of freedom accessible to the Tunisian journalist, how do you evaluate the Arab journalist's performance?

Abderrazzak Kefi: There are two kinds of Arab press. The press which is rooted in the capitals of the Arab countries, with which we are joined by very good, excellent relations in all areas, and has committed itself to the platform of its countries' governments, which respects Tunisia's sovereignty and knows the clear limits in its dealings with us -- this Arab press has dealt with the developments Tunisia has experienced honestly, responsibly and in the abstract and its press performance has not relied on backbiting and rumors in its presentation of the facts and description of what has gone on in Tunisia.

As for part of the press, which it has become the custom to label the emigre press, I have a number of comments and criticisms on its performance. The main thing which must be said, with the utmost frankness, is that this press has published articles, editorials and analyses on the domestic situation in Tunisia in a manner which does not serve the main purpose of describing things and presenting them to the Arab reader, but rather is intended to provoke. The second rebuke, as well, against the performance of this press is that all the articles which have dealt with the Tunisian situation on the basis of analysis have built their conclusions on purely personal matters which govern relations among Tunisian politicians. These analyses have often gone into intimate issues in a manner which has not been appropriate and is to be rejected. The writer of the article usually invented incorrect details through his claim that he had become an expert on Tunisian affairs. One should bear in mind that most of these people have paid a single visit to our country, at the most two visits. There are many articles which people have written who do not know Tunisia and do not have a grasp of the historic facts or the political relations and clear bonds which tie Tunisia to its neighbors and brothers in the Arab world.

Let me go on to say that these people do not know the Tunisian people and do not have a grasp of the particular features of Tunisian society. If they had known all this data, they would have realized that the things and the facts which have been attributed to Tunisia during this period could not have happened in Tunisia. It has caused us pain that none of these writings have honored the Tunisian people's struggle under the greater combatant His Excellency President Habib Bourguiba. We are a people who respect their leaders and respect the boundaries that exist between personal matters and matters which it is proper to treat and write about. We are a country of moderation, respect for others, mutual affection and fraternity, a country where the mind governs everything that is said and done. The master of the situation is always the mind, and the criterion is the public interest and the nation's security and safety. All the developments which Tunisia has witnessed recently have appealed to the mind for judgment and have sought enlightenment from it alone. In spite of this, one can say that a small number of the articles the emigre press has written about Tunisia have been characterized by objectivity and professional ethics with respect to what they have written.

AL-HAWADITH: It can be observed that your conversation evidences some criticism when you talk abundantly about the performance of some sectors of the Arab press regarding what Tunisia has gone through recently.

Abderrazzak Kefi: For heaven's sake, if an accusation had been made and unjust persons had derogated us from papers of long standing which are known for their realistic performance and their press integrity, we would have made a criticism!

We cannot, and it is not in our power to, rebuke publications which are not worthy of our criticism and are not to be described by the most modest criteria of suitable press performance. The Arab reader is smart and he knows that these publications do not give him accurate news articles so much as they try to deceive him with provocative titles. Though it is easy to deceive this honorable Arab reader once, he will not fall into the trap twice. A press which does not respect the reader's intelligence is a press which is not worthy of respect in the first place. We believe that the trial between the reader and these publications is in session.

AL-HAWADITH: The Arab reader might not know that Tunisia, which has been familiar with pluralism in the party and political context, is familiar with pluralism and applies it in the press context as well. How has the unofficial press, or the opposition press, dealt with the recent newly-created things in Tunisia?

Abdelrazzak Kefi: The behavior of the independent press has been extremely patriotic and its press performance has been worthy of it and its nation Tunisia. This independent press sector is not independent of its nation, Tunisia, and perhaps the responsibilities assigned to it have been much greater than those the official press bears. While we differ in opinion regarding a number of things due to a difference in political views, which is a legitimate, healthy thing, we are all in agreement over what is in the interests of our nation and what is in support of its causes and raises its status under the leadership of the greater fighting man, the builder of the resurgence of Tunisia and the creator of its independence.

AL-HAWADITH: Tunisia occupies an influential position in the framework of the Maghreb. The developments it has experienced have received attention and followup from press sectors in Maghreb capitals. How do you evaluate this performance? Do you have any reservations?

Abderrazzak Kefi: What you have said about the non-emigre Arab press which is resident in its own countries holds with respect to the press performance in the Maghreb capitals adjacent to us. We are linked to them by good credible relations. There is no criticism. We respect their style, which has respected its limits with us and has appealed to the mind and the national interest on entering into our issues.

AL-HAWADITH: Will the negative features you talked about in emigre Arab press sectors impinge on your media policy with some effect? Will the quantity of weekly publications in the markets of Tunisia, which now total about 500 titles, be reduced?

Abderrazzak Kefi: So far, no change has occurred in our previous media policy, which opened Tunisia's doors to this large number of daily and weekly titles alike. The distance we have travelled in supporting the course of media liberalization and implanting the process of democracy makes it mandatory that we continue this platform and dictates that we deal with all negative features with understanding, calm, intelligence and generosity. We hope that the mind will prevail and uprightness and firmness will dominate in the press performance whose negative features we have spoken about. Ultimately, the greatest loser is the credibility of these publications, not Tunisia. We enjoy many good forms of credibility and have good ties to Arab and non-Arab press sectors which know how to present the reader with correct news and information which has not been handled incorrectly. In an era in which communications technology has attained great status, the Arab reader must know the truth by means of it, take what the solid publications say and leave aside publications which live on backbiting and derive their sources and information from conversation in cafes and salons.

I must say, happily and with satisfaction, that many of the magazines which have accused us and have been destructive to themselves have returned to their uprightness and ceased relying on the style of backbiting in the things they write about us and others. We hope that this review regarding everything that is written about us and others will be the prelude to a new era in the Arab press.

We, in the context of the Ministry of Information, did not direct criticism. These publications ventured on the process of self-criticism and the reconsideration of positions, and I believe that this conduct, on both sides, has borne good fruit. We respect others and this respect enriches the process of democracy in the Arab world. We love to be written about and love what has happened and happens in Tunisia to be subjected to analysis and criticism. We do not believe in self-sufficiency and we are not introverted; rather, we love to have writers who address themselves to our issues commit themselves to the boundaries of intelligence and logic in their press activity and to respect themselves before they respect the sanctity of our issues. We are Arabs and we know the limits of what is said and what is not said. The charters of Arabhood and the eras of Islam are present among us. We are not afraid of the truth. What we are afraid of is that a person will write about Tunisia with the goal of defaming Tunisia. When he writes about Tunisia and exploits what we state, we, as people responsible for Tunisia, intend to remedy the negative features which occur. It is as if there were just negative features in Tunisia. That is something to be rejected, it is unjust and it is an accusation. The morality and ethics of the profession dictate that we treat all aspects of the issue.

We do not claim that everything in Tunisia is as good as could be. This government is the first to talk about all shortcomings, frankly and clearly, before it talks about existing achievements and resources. The first person to talk about the problems of bribery and corruption, who said that he would dedicate the life that remained to him to fighting these shortcomings, has been President Bourguiba, who has ventured to talk about these negative features and about dedicating his time to dealing with them and stimulating the agencies of the government to deal with them with him most energetically.

All these things we can see in Arab press sectors under provocative headlines which talk about bribery and corruption and ignore the stand the government and president of the country have taken in dealing with these plagues. Stranger than that, the facts are accessible to all Tunisian citizens. His excellency the president talks to the television and the press about these negative phenomena and addresses himself to the plans that will guarantee they are dealt with. What do you imagine the reaction among ordinary Tunisian citizens to be when they read the half-truths and incomplete information that is written about their country?

AL-HAWADITH: Tunisia is a member of more than one Arab conciliation committee. Knowing what is going on in Tunisia objectively and truthfully serves Tunisian efforts at conciliation and imparts added benefits to them in the context of Arab solidarity. Will your ministry seek to set out specific rules which will closely oversee everything that is written about Tunisia, proceeding from purely Tunisian sources accredited as correspondents or delegates?

Abderrazzak Kefi: The rules exist and the media plan also has been approved and exists. All these rules continue to be contingent on the initiatives of the people who are involved in the pursuit. Such commitment to the rules requires a high level of professional ethics and morality. The whole issue is one of the morals and personal discipline the individual exercises within himself. Tunisia is the country of moderation and the country of logic and recourse to the mind. We strive toward that which will bring hearts among our brother Arabs closer together. Our presence on more than one conciliation committee is only proof of the knowledge of our brother Arab leaders and heads of our benefits and our innate nature, and this is great capital for us and calls for pride and self-respect on our part.

The Arab journalist, whether residing in Tunisia or abroad, must be clearly aware of all these facts and feel as he writes the consequences of the responsibility that lies upon him. The written word is a very serious matter and not just a diversion or simple game. What harms Tunisia through the falsification of what is happening there harms the Arab world, because we are an inseparable part of the whole, which is this Arab nation.

AL-HAWADITH: For the matter to be left to the integrity of others I believe involves much exemplary character which is not in keeping with the magnitude of damage you have talked about. Will you leave the entire matter to fluctuating initiatives on the part of the other party or does the ministry intend to set out specific rules governing the quantity of titles which come into Tunisia each week?

Abderrazzak Kefi: The rules have been in being since before the accusation and harm took place at the hands of the press sector which I have talked about. The new thing that has happened with these rules is that the others who have inflicted harm on us and have accused us have undertaken to review what they have written, and consequently these rules have been turned from mere measures which we take in the ministry into intrinsic deterrents among these writers. While we have striven to control this abundance of titles which come to us every week, we do so in order to protect our national

security and protect our citizens from confusion, rumors and lies reaching them in news articles which are lacking in correct information. We would prefer that they themselves review what they have done, rather than taking action ourselves in the direction of adopting any measure which will put limits on them. This is something good, that we should observe some response on this level. In any event, we have confronted the distribution of anything which infringes the sovereignty of Tunisia and detracts from the gains of its democracy under the leadership of the president and greater combatant. We have stood up to everything that has the effect of infringing on Tunisians' feelings in going into intimate things which they respect and hold sacred.

AL-HAWADITH: The government has called the opposition currents and parties which have permits to participate in the economic and social council which will provide the government with suitable plans and programs, and the movements which are hesitant or reject the government's offer complain that a large number of opposition newspapers and publications have been suspended from work for some time. Will a review be made of this measure in keeping with the new climate, with the objective of enriching the process of democracy in the country?

Abderrazzak Kefi: The connection is not apt. For these people to reject the government's offer of membership in the council is one thing, and for them to connect their rejection to the halt in the issuance of opposition publications is something else, and it is not convincing or successful.

Every political party or current has the right to choose its justifications and set out its conditions. I do not interfere in this matter. It is more cognizant and has more experience with the conditions and atmosphere which it considers appropriate for its policy. However, for there to be a dialectic relationship between going into the council and issuing a publication is illogical.

There are a number of movements which have been offered participation, their papers are still operating and coming out every day, and in spite of that they have refused to join this economic and social council. For your information, most of the publications whose issuance has been suspended took the initiative in that regard through internal decisions in which the government had no hand, and the suspension did not take place by decree or edict of the government. The intrinsic suspension occurred for reasons which these bodies are familiar with.

This is one pretext, and there is another pretext, as if one of these people expressing rejection were to say, "I will take part only if the political atmosphere is purified!" What is meant by purifying the political atmosphere? I personally see no connection between joining the council and these pretexts, reissuing a paper or clearing the political atmosphere, especially since if anyone who works in this council really wanted to give his view, that would not have been impossible for him. There is an independent press and a podium of free opinions which can address itself to the view of a member of this council.

The strange thing is that the heads of the parties rejecting the government's invitation on grounds that the issuance of their publications has

been suspended have not for one moment stopped presenting their views in other daily papers or weekly publications. There are other independent papers which are not embarrassed to give free rein to the publication of statements of heads of political parties in Tunisia.

AL-HAWADITH: For 2 years, and during an interview with you, you talked about a plan of action you would carry out with the goal of setting out an Arab media charter to whose sections all Arab countries would commit themselves. At that time, you said that the Arab press provides decisionmakers with the material for their decisions and consequently any talk about Arab solidarity must proceed from this fact specifically. Are you still at the same level of enthusiasm? Will the negative features you referred to prompt you to continue to advance this media plan?

Abderrazzak Kefi: Since I talked to you about this project, no meeting of Arab information ministers has been held, because this sort of idea can come into being only in the context of the Arab ministers of information, which is the appropriate framework for the discussion, thorough study and profound consideration of this plan. I believe, in advance, that the fellow Arab information ministers will not oppose this plan. This plan will give the Arab press sector a greater opportunity for its purely professional performance to be imbued with the flavor of harmonious national action. I do not just believe in the principle that the press is only for journalism. A responsible, constructive role performed by our Arab press is necessary. The idea is still in its infancy. We hope, and I have not retreated from this plan, that the suitable opportunity will arise for presenting the idea of this charter, and we will see how it will develop.

11887
CSO: 4504/185

TUNISIA

RACHID SFAR ADDRESSES PARTY BRANCH CONFERENCE

LD221522 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Mar 87

[Announcer-read report on the speech delivered by Rachid Sfar, Socialist Destourian Party secretary general and prime minister, at the conference of the party's branch at El-Masra]

[Excerpts] Presiding over the meeting of the party branch at El-Marsa, Rachid Sfar said that the conferences of the party branches provide an opportunity to consolidate the principle of dialogue, which has become one of our methods, and which constitutes one of the reasons for the party's ability to continue the triumph it scored in the battle for liberation into the battle for building and construction, particularly as the country stands at a decisive watershed in its history.

He said that the party has placed in the forefront of its preoccupations the continuation of work to save the estimated 20 percent of the citizens who live under the poverty line and thereby guarantee them the minimum level of dignity.

Inasmuch as it is anxious to safeguard and consolidate the people's gains, the Socialist Destourian Party understands the ambitions of the citizens and their desires to improve their living conditions and increasing their purchasing power. But, though legitimate, these ambitions cannot be achieved without a full understanding of the repercussions of the world climate, its future dimensions and impacts on their development course, he said.

He called for following the example of the peoples of the advanced countries toward the world economic crisis: the peoples of these countries have faced, in a spirit of extreme patriotism and great discipline and restraint, the repercussions of this crisis. Thus, the trade unions' demand tendency receded, and the trade unions began to cooperate with the governments for finding the solutions that can save the economies of their countries and enable them to overcome all difficulties.

He said that the seventh development plan will be one for the redressing and rectification of the economic conditions through the offering of a number of sacrifices which have to be distributed in the most possible equitable manner among the 80 percent of the citizens who have so far achieved the minimum level of means of living and through restoring to the economic institutions their ability to work and expand.

With regard to youth, Prime Minister Rachid Sfar pointed out that care for youth was a cause of destiny particularly as the Tunisian youth are facing difficulties and are confused, like the rest of the youth of the world. It is our duty to orientate our youth about the methods of struggle to overcome the challenges and difficulties. We must guide our youth to the roads which lead to the realization of their ambitions.

He continued we must inform our youth by clever means on how to achieve their aspirations and raise the standard of their society, following the example of the Japanese youth who care about nothing other than attain the highest level of education without being influenced by any external foreign propaganda or currents. Care for our youth should not be confined to leisure activities and clubs. We must also enlighten our youth about the true problems facing our society. We must make the youth realize how lucky they are to belong to universities and so they must not get lost in useless labyrinthes.

In this context, Prime Minister Sfar pointed out that the so-called masked colonialism constitutes foreign currents which preoccupy us and prevent us attending to our pboelsm, and which only serves foreign interests. He pointed out that one of the most dangerous such currents was religious deviations which tries to infuse religious sedition in our society, at a time when the Socialist Destourian Party was the foremost defender of Islam and its true teachings. It is the party that fought since its birth to save the nation from religious emasculation and atheism and guaranteed the Tunisian nation's adherence to the true principles of Islam. He affirmed that the Islamic religion was one of good behavior and good manners and not of acts of violence. For this reason, he said, the party has fought and will continue to fight for the sake of protecting true Islam in Tunisia from all the misleading currents which camouflage themselves behind religious guises and which mislead the innocent youth. Ours is a policy of firmness, on the one hand, and a policy of dialogue and conviction, on the other, but without extremism or fanaticism. Our party has always denounced extremism wherever it came from. For it is a party that seeks progress for the society under the umbrella of national harmony.

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TUNISIA

EDUCATION MINISTER DISCUSSES RECENT UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS

Tunis AL-SABAH AL-USBU'I in Arabic 23 Mar 87 p 2

[Interview with Education Minister Amor Chedli: "Amor Chedli Tells AL-SABAH AL-USBU'I: There Should Be No Worries about the Fate of the Current University Year"]

[Text] The University of Tunisia is now going through a state of truce dictated by the spring school vacation. This truce has occurred after about 50 days of strikes and disturbances in most higher institutes and faculties, especially in the capital.

This situation has polarized, and continues to polarize, Tunisian public opinion, especially since the disturbances, whose occurrence the citizens and officials have "become accustomed to" at the beginning of each university year as a phenomenon which is almost a "convention" of the University of Tunisia, are limited in time and the students will soon be passing through them to return to studies directly after the first six-part examinations.

However, matters have grown beyond what they were in the past, have developed and have gone beyond the "mere exchange of violence and halt in studies" to aggression against officials in the university. In addition, most of the students, according to the contacts we made with an elite of them, in particular students in the final years, have become tired of these disturbances and strikes, with or without reason.

The subject has met with continuous followup from the highest authorities in the country, including the president himself, who has approved a number of measures to deal with the situation.

These measures are characterized by firmness and decisiveness, but they are needed in order to guarantee the normal progress of studies under the aegis of security.

Proceeding from this, the task of preserving security within the university sanctuary has been assigned to civilian security force aides and that has occurred in conjunction with a campaign of detentions in the ranks of the personnel belonging to the current, whom the minister of education and

scientific research has labelled "hoodlums." Is this the autumn of the university, or will good sense prevail and the beginning of the spring vacation become the beginning of spring in the University of Tunisia?

Mr Amor Chedli rapidly responded to AL-SABAH AL-USBU'I's request to answer the questions which were fermenting in people's minds regarding the situation in the university.

[Question] What is going on in the university?

[Answer] What is going on is that there are extremist ideologies which one cannot call Islamic, because Islam in its perfect form and in its essence and tolerance has no part of these groups, which deserve to be called "hoodlums" and have distorted the pure religion and used it as an instrument for violating order. Some of them have tried to prevent their colleagues from studying and pursuing work, and that does not correspond with the basic principles of the freedom of the individual. We must take a decisive stand regarding this situation. The university, for years, has been a theater for extremist destructive ideas which as is well known have led to the infringement of the dignity of this educational institution and even to the seizure and "trial" of a faculty dean by these groups. At that time we were not able to identify these parties, which were acting in the context of a situation dominated by obscurity and chaos.

Since the greater combatant, President Habib Bourguiba, assigned the responsibility for the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research to me and I was appointed to it, we have started since the beginning of the year to confront this situation through unremitting action, to focus and consolidate university authority so that it will be able to impose respect for the laws and measures which are in effect, which clearly define responsibilities, duties and rights with respect to all the parties present in the university environment.

In this manner, whenever we managed to identify a troublemaker, he would be presented to the disciplinary council with the purpose of enlightening him as to his rights and duties, so that his behavior would perhaps conform to the requirements of the institution he was studying in, and, if he continued with his obstinacy we would take the necessary measures against him, whether represented by temporary or final dismissal.

This year, since last February, that is, since the first six-part examinations, we noticed that the phenomenon of suspended studies had become widespread and we were compelled to ask the deans, who were not able to control the situation within their institutions, to ask for help from the security forces in case of need and take all the measures necessary to implant security within the university and protect this institution from all irresponsible conduct. It is not reasonable that we should give free rein to elements of corruption, saboteurs and people trafficking in religion.

We hope that we will have succeeded in enabling the students to be aware of their interests so that the university institution will resume performing its basic and natural role, instead of being open terrain for extremist

political ideas, and so that it will realize its pledge of civilization and preserve the true level of the meaning of study and training.

[Question] Is the government prepared, as some news in the press has stated, to back down with regard to the 23 August 1982 order in order to make a fifth appointment at the first stage possible?

[Answer] I would like to state first of all regarding the August 1982 order that this order concerns registration in the faculties and institutes. Some students submitted unreasonable requests regarding that concerning the number of repeat years. We say that it is absolutely not relevant that the government should back down with regard to this matter in any way. Moreover, it is appropriate that our Bourguibist regime, which has chosen free education as a clear political platform, not prevent the university from accepting groups of people who have passed the bachelor's diploma and secondary education in general while the scope is left to people repeating in higher education to repeat the repeat years a number of times in an almost endless manner. That is a waste of the country's resources.

All that the situation involves is that the government is prepared to review the possibility of granting permits to some students regarding whom specific conditions have been fulfilled, whose fulfillment has been confirmed by study of their academic files, to take examinations again, although that will not be an appointment to a faculty or higher institute but just permission to take the examination again, after the agreement of the scholarly council of the faculty concerned, with respect to each demand in isolation.

[Question] What measures has the government taken to cope with the situation in the university?

[Answer] There are two methods, embodied in:

First, confronting this extremist current, or what I call the "hoodlums," which includes those whom we consider constitute a threat which must be eliminated and removed from the university arena, by identifying the elements in the current then trying to enlighten them that it is in their interests to desist from their conduct, and, if they do not become cognizant of that and the university authorities do not manage to convince them of the need to respect the inviolate features, laws and organizations of the university, removing them, even if we are compelled to seek the aid of the security forces.

Although this method requires time, it is assured that its results will be positive, since it will allow this situation to be faced firmly, fruitfully and decisively.

Second, having the security forces intervene and purge the scene of these elements at one stroke.

What is being pursued at present is either a mixture of the two methods or one of them, as the circumstances and seriousness of the situation require and in accordance with the feasibility of one method or another in a given

faculty or institute. In any event, I would like to state that need has required the presence of security personnel in some faculties or higher institutes for reasons of circumstance, as is well known, since the troublemaking was present in a noticeable fashion only during the month of February and the government does not yet have any intention to bring back what was known as the vigil, as some people might imagine.

The important thing, as far as we are concerned, is that the university continue to perform its mission and that it remain removed from all currents which are absolutely not compatible in an institution which costs the national community serious sacrifices.

[Question] What will be the fate of the university year if the strikes continue?

[Answer] First of all, we hope they will not continue. Moreover, we have covered important ground so far in the administration of various teaching programs and there is nothing to prompt us to think about eliminating or even merely postponing an examination series. Consequently, to this day, there should be no worries about the fate of the university year.

Here I would like to refer to the serious work all the people in charge on all levels in the university, in the form of deans, professors, administration and workers, are performing to cope with this situation and control it. I believe that the absolute majority of our students' sense of their responsibility will in effect prompt them to cease standing with their hands tied in the face of these destructive currents, which want to infringe upon their training and their freedom to study and consequently realization of their future. This makes us confident of the fate of the university, thanks to everyone's feeling of responsibility and their firm belief in the need that its essence must remain clean and pure of the filth that has become attached to it in recent years and that its future must be brilliant and radiant, as its founder, the greater combattant, His Excellency President Habib Bourguiba, has wanted it.

11887
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TUNISIA

BREAKDOWN OF EXPATRIATE MANPOWER DISTRIBUTION REVIEWED

Tunis AL-SABAH AL-USBU'I in Arabic 23 Mar 87 p 11

[Article: "Tunisian Manpower Is Spread out over All Areas of the World"]

[Text] The emigration of Tunisian manpower was launched more than 30 years ago and experienced its peak in the late sixties and the beginning of the seventies.

At its outset, it was oriented toward the European countries, where it was distributed in more than 12 countries there. Today, however, migration to Europe has started to decline, ceding place for other areas of the world, at the forefront of which comes the Orient.

After the West, the trend of migration of Tunisian manpower turned to the Orient, whose countries, especially the Arab countries, have begun striving earnestly to conclude repeated contracts with Tunisian experts and capable persons.

For all this, we now have manpower distributed in all areas of the world, as follows [see following page].

Labor Contracts abroad

In the context of the organization of the migration of Tunisian manpower, and in the effort to protect it wherever it is located, the Tunisian authorities have striven to conclude international agreements with a number of countries in the world.

The Tunisian authorities have not stopped at this point, but are still striving for further support for migrants by keeping and revising agreements, renewing them and keeping abreast of all legal developments which occur in the area of labor and the exchange of skilled persons and manpower.

Tunisia has managed to keep abreast of all international developments that take place in this area and it supports its migrant workers through various channels, including those that exist in our embassies and consulates abroad and those that are in the country, such as the investment agency, the bureau

Country	1980	1986
Switzerland	2,400	3,000
Italy	10,700	12,000
Belgium	7,634	8,287
West Germany	25,593	23,168
France	219,000	263,018
Austria	2,200	2,800
The Netherlands	1,380	2,023
Algeria	24,000	41,136
Saudi Arabia	13,000	17,287
Iraq	2,000	1,200
Qatar	---	810
Kuwait	---	2,000
Oman	---	600
Syria	---	350

for the promotion of labor and Tunisian labors abroad and the employment offices.

We find that the labor agreements and contracts which Tunisia concludes with countries that want to appoint Tunisian manpower are among the most important of these protective measures.

Housing Services Offered to Our Emigre Workers

The real estate agency for housing has since 1981 devoted a branch for our migrant workers who want to own housing in Tunisia, on the basis of applications which have continued to increase, year after year.

This branch now reviews all the applications submitted by our migrant workers related to the purchase of land, shops and other matters of a social, commercial and economic character.

In the period between 1983 and 1986, demand was greater than supply. Therefore, the delivery period ranged from 4 to 7 years. In spite of all that, thousands of Tunisian workers managed to attain their wishes. In 1985, the agency met the requests of 25,000 Tunisian workers in three provinces surrounding the capital and 1,300 requests within the republic.

Statistics obtained from the real estate agency's housing branch indicate that 90 percent of the requests submitted by our migrant workers are directed toward housing and shops. Thirty percent of the ones carried out are of a commercial character and 50 percent are of a social character; as for the remaining 10 percent, which are submitted by persons who have requested to be in the major cities, these have been carried out in stages and are now starting to be carried out.

The Remittances of Migrants' Money Are Constantly Increasing

The matter of the money of Tunisians working abroad often has been the object of debate, since the difficulty of making remittances and the amounts remitted have been their main preoccupation.

Thanks to the consolidation of efforts between the Tunisian Central Bank and the other branches on the one hand and their counterparts in other countries, Tunisian workers now meet with no difficulty in this regard. The Tunisian banks have undertaken to conclude agreements by which the transfer of the migrants' money will take place easily, and thus Tunisian migrants are now able to open bank accounts abroad in which they will be able to put all the money they are permitted to remit from the countries they are working in.

In addition, the measures taken in this regard have enabled Tunisian migrants to have the right to choose to withdraw their money when and where they wish.

As a result of the development which has occurred in the banking sector, the value of hard currency our workers abroad are saving has improved and has started clearly contributing to advancement of the country's economy. According to statistics the Tunisian Central Bank has cited, the workforce's hard currency income in the past 4 years was as follows:

1983: 243,800 dinars

1984: 245,900 dinars

1985: 225,800 dinars

1986: 210,000 dinars

Our migrant workers have managed to revive many small and massive projects in all the provinces of the republic.

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TUNISIA

BRIEFS

VISIT BY AL-QADHDHAFI--Arab sources in Tunisia asserted to AL-TADAMUN that the visit the member of the Libyan command and Col Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's emissary Maj al-Khuwaylidi al-Humaydi made to Tunisia ended so successfully that it is possible to say that Col Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi may soon make a visit to Tunisia. These sources pointed out that the Libyan-Tunisian talks were not smooth, but that did not make it impossible to state that they succeeded in transcending more than one barrier which had prevented the realization of a Libyan-Tunisian detente, especially regarding a number of issues of an economic and security character which had been pending between the two countries (see page 17). The same sources also pointed out that an important element contributed to the success of the visit and the discussions of the Libyan emissary, embodied in the Libyan leadership's failure to respond to efforts the former Tunisian premier, Mohamed Mzali, had made to establish relations with Tripoli during his present exile. [Text] [London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 21-27 Mar 87 p 7] 11887

BOURGUIBA'S SON FACES PROBLEMS--Tunisian political sources asserted that an article was issued in a French monthly magazine which referred to the brilliance of Habib Bourguiba Jr's fortunes in the recent period and caused the development of a certain chill in relations between the Tunisian president and his only son. These sources added that Bourguiba the son started to play such a prominent role in recent months that it would have brought him back to his former position in the government, when he was the second man in the government after the prime minister in his capacity at that time as advisor to the president. In this regard, he recently played an important role in the arrest of the businessman Moncef Bouzaganda, who had been involved in extensive activities of financial fraud. However, the article in the French paper changed the direction of the wind for a while against the interests of the president's former advisor. [Text] [London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 21-27 Mar 87 p 7] 11887

PROBLEMS WITH OPPOSITION--A Tunisian political figure has held that the failure of the dialogue which took place between three opposition parties and the government on the possibility of opening the economic and social council to figures from the opposition is proof that relations between the regime and the parties is not smooth, especially with the suspension of all the opposition papers last month. This figure revealed to AL-TADAMUN that at

the outset the prime minister, Rachid Sfar, sent letters to three parties, inviting them to appoint five of their members, two of whom would be chosen for membership in the council. However, the parties replied with letters requesting that freedom of political action and freedom of the press be granted and that the law on the council be changed so that all political elements within it would be equal. The government rejected these conditions and the meetings which had been scheduled between the prime minister and the heads of the three parties were cancelled. This figure has held that the failure of this dialogue wrecked the chances for the first meeting between the prime minister and the opposition parties to lay some groundwork for realizing extensive social reconciliation between the regime and the opposition. [Text] [London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 21 Mar 87 p 8] 11887

CSO: 4504/185

FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSES FOREIGN AFFAIRS

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 30 Mar 87 pp 16-18

[Interview with Mr Taha Yasin Ramadan, first deputy prime minister, by 'Abd-al-Wahab al-Qaysi: "Closing the Straits of Hormuz Would not Matter to Us;" in Baghdad, date of interview not specified]

[Text] "The deteriorating Arab situation has led Arab regimes to take a stand with the enemy against the Arabs."

"Our relations with the Soviets are advancing in all areas."

"The status of our troops all along the front is excellent, particularly in the area east of al-Basrah."

"What the Syrians did in Lebanon was treacherous and shows a decline in Arab morals and values."

"It is time for the Arabs to know that Iran is after their very existence just as Israel has been."

"Some people thought that extending bridges to Iran could help stop the war, but the results have shown otherwise."

Iran's year of decision has ended in abysmal failure. Although the battle went on for 70 days and was one of the longest battles in the history of the war, it ended with Iraq's stunning steadfastness and with Iran's failure to penetrate Iraqi defenses and occupy the city of al-Basrah.

Mr Taha Yasin Ramadan, first deputy prime minister, talked with AL-DUSTUR about the war. What he said answered many questions that are being asked about the Iraq-Iran war and about current Iraqi, Arab and international issues. Mr Ramadan was optimistic about an Iraqi victory after the battles of "the great harvest," which were preceded by the battles of "the great day" and their disastrous outcome for Iran.

[Question] How would you comment on Iran's year of decision?

[Answer] Before commenting on Iran's year of decision which Iran's leaders set forth 8 months ago, we must first understand what is meant by a year of

decision. What was the target which Iran, joined by many international and Arab parties were planning to achieve? Occupying al-Basrah and the surrounding area and posing a threat to the Gulf states represented the minimum objective which they had planned to achieve. Mobilizing troops and preparing fighters took almost 1 whole year. There was also full coordination of information with the Americans and Israelis who also provided Iran with weapons and equipment in an attempt to have an effect on the superiority Iraq had with some weapons. In addition, an attempt was made to make many fellow Arabs and friends anxious and worried by suggesting that possibilities for Iraq's steadfastness were not fully guaranteed. Although none of our fellow Arabs and friends openly told us that, their anxiety was visible in their eyes and audible in their conversations.

The battles started on December 24 and 25, and they went through stages. Their outcome and their consequences are well-known. What was achieved during that period was this: most of the formations the Iranians had prepared in 1 year and the equipment that was provided for them by Zionists and by the United States were gone. Iranian fighters who fought in the battles that were fought in recent weeks were not the kind of fighters for whom the preparations had been made. In fact, they were the product of a hurried mobilization process. In other words, they were less capable, and they had received less training. At the same time, the well-known American-Israeli weapons scandal projected new images of the Iranian regime's intentions and new pictures of Iran's relationship with Zionism. This relationship, which unfolded over a 7-year period, was not limited to preparation and coordination efforts for those battles: preparations had lasted for over 1 year. and coordination efforts were made with all anti-Iraqi forces and all forces opposing the Arab nation. Chief among those anti-Arab forces are imperialists, Zionists and speakers of Arabic. But Iran's attack failed to achieve any stage or part of its objectives. Furthermore, slogans proclaimed by Iran gave Iraq and Iraqis strength and victory. All the forces of evil had joined forces to harm Iraq and Iraqis, but they failed in the face of the legendary steadfastness of brave Iraqi fighters who wrote their nation's history with their virtuous blood.

[Question] How do you view the next stage of the war?

[Answer] With a great deal of optimism. We have gone through a critical stage that was preceded by one during which major preparations were made. We also overcame a conspiracy by international and Arab parties, none of whose proclaimed objectives were achieved. Consequently, the results of any subsequent attempts made by Iranians could only be much worse than what befell them as a result of their attack against Iraq. And although reactions among Arabs to the attack have been less than what they should have been, the consequences of that attack are bound to have an impact on the Arab scene after the Iranian-Zionist-American scandal was uncovered. Some people believed that extending bridges to Iran could help bring the war to an end, but the results have shown otherwise. The Iranian regime was thus encouraged to continue its aggression, not to mention Asad's and al-Qadhafi's proclaimed assistance to Iran so that it can continue its aggression against Iraq.

[Question] How would you evaluate the situation on the front?

[Answer] Let me emphasize that the status of our troops all along the front, and particularly in the area east of al-Basrah, is excellent. Let me also emphasize that we foiled the main objective of the conspiracy from its inception till the final chapter. the year of decision. But we are not saying that the conspiracy has run out of objectives. In fact, the conspiracy continues as long as Iraq goes on working for progress and as long as it tries to build a developing Arab capability and extend a hand to all fellow Arabs to enable them to play a positive role in the region and in the world as well. What is required are vigilance, caution and an effort to advance our economic capabilities. Efforts must be made to enable us to provide what is needed to make progress on the front or in the construction effort inside the country.

[Question] Moscow has announced its position on the Gulf War. But what is the United States' real position? It is known that the United States claims to have one policy, but that it follows another in practice.

[Answer] Iraq has not been silent about the Iranian scandal which the world has been talking about. We believe that some chapters of that story have not yet been revealed.

The American position is full of contradictions. The Americans used to declare publicly that they were against the continuation of the war, but the truth is that top officials in the U.S. administration were supplying Iran with weapons. This is an indication of clear decadence in political morals. The United States has lost its credibility even among its Arab friends. Now, however, it is announcing an attempt to find ways to end the war, but I personally cannot trust such statements if I can find nothing new and distinguished in them to remove from my mind the doubts and suspicions I have about the U.S. position. That is why when the United States tries to persuade some of its friends that it made a mistake and that it assumes responsibility for that mistake, its efforts fall short of asserting its credibility and its future intentions. The Soviet Union's position, however, is concrete. According to the information we have, the Soviets are raising the question of stopping the war in the course of their contacts with Iranians. They are also convinced that Iran does not wish to end the war; they are convinced that Iran wishes the aggression to continue. The recent scandal with Israel and the United States may have added depth to the picture. We are quite comfortable with the Soviet leaders' position and their convictions in that regard. Relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union are good, and they are developing in all areas.

[Question] Reports indicate that Iraq has succeeded in destroying 70 percent of Iran's oil installations, which are considered the backbone of Iran's economy. Have there been any new developments in that regard?

[Answer] The destruction of economic installations is a course of action and a decision which Iraqi leaders will not retract. Significant progress has been made in that regard, and we will continue to make progress. In fact, we will double our efforts to destroy economic installations as long as the Iranian regime is determined to go on fighting.

[Question] The U.S. media announced that Iranians set up six missiles at the Straits of Hormuz. These missiles, which have a range of 80 kilometers, can be fired against ships. Do you believe that Iran can close the Straits of Hormuz?

[Answer] Closing the Straits of Hormuz would not matter to us because the straits is an international body of water. It was some time ago that Iran announced it would close the straits. That threat was made to test the waters so to speak. It may be used against vessels owned by Gulf countries or to blackmail Gulf countries. The threat may also be used to create a certain climate which would become the reason for intervention by foreign troops.

[Question] Iran is using the Amal Organization, Hizballah and other organizations that are loyal to it to reinforce its positions in Beirut. Do you expect there will be a conflict between Syria and Iran over Lebanon, or will the partners divide Lebanon between them by slaughtering the Palestinians?

[Answer] Unfortunately, the deteriorating Arab situation has led to the break up of the nation. It has also led Arab regimes to the position of taking a stand with the enemy against Arabs. It has caused Arabs to kill Palestinians in their camps. What the Syrians did in Lebanon was treacherous and shows a decline in Arab morals and values. The Amal Organization though is an example of horrible and hateful sectarianism: it killed old people, women and children, and it starved and terrorized unarmed people. It will carry the dishonor of those actions forever. The suspect and client Amal Organization is a tool that is being used by the Syrian regime. Although Iran's objectives are the same as those of the Syrian regime and its protege, the Amal Organization--they all want to slaughter Palestinians--Amal is subordinate to the Syrian regime. Even when Syrian troops entered West Beirut, their aim was to rescue Amal after that organization's failure to slaughter the Palestinians. That is why the Syrian regime sent its troops to finish the job and carry out the plan which the Amal Organization had started. It is obvious that the Syrian regime, the Amal Organization and the Iranian regime have the same objectives in Lebanon on behalf of the Zionists. Rumors about disputes between these three parties are merely used to numb the senses, to cover up what they are doing and to deceive openly because what they are really doing emphasizes their close cooperation. At any rate, what is happening in Lebanon is happening at the expense of the interests of the citizens of Lebanon. Foreigners there are playing a part in complicating the situation further. But we are confident that the Lebanese people can find a solution for themselves. Scores of hostages are being held in Beirut so that Syria and Iran can blackmail the international community.

But the American method is bad. Why are the Americans dealing with Iranian terrorists while declaring their opposition to terrorism?

[Question] Will President Saddam Husayn's decision to turn workers into civil servants bring surplus civil servants into plant management positions and into positions where they will be implementing development plans under the war?

[Answer] That is not the objective, and it has nothing to do with surplus civil servants. We have a production sector. What we found is that creating an appropriate climate is one thing we can do to help increase productivity. We are

confident that we have major capabilities for increasing production capabilities which are considered a principal and an important factor in the progress of development. That decision has been researched and studied ad nauseum, and it has to do with the ideas of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and building a balanced society whose sectors try to live together in harmony. This matter is not restricted to the state sector and the socialist sector. Every activity has its standard of efficiency, acquisition of knowledge and training. Why should the name of an occupation change a citizen's social worth? Why shouldn't we allow a citizen to make a greater contribution and achieve the worth and advanced position he wishes to achieve in production management? A citizen can realize greater resources by increasing productivity, and he can have a better social position through equality of opportunity.

The aforementioned law will play a major role in that regard. The decision to abolish institutions is not intended to abolish anything which is part of the production process. But it does mean, however, a reduction in the stages of administrative work.

[Question] What is new with the oil situation, and what has happened with regard to expanding the capacity of the oil pipeline which runs through Turkey and Saudi Arabia? What is Iraq's position on the question of setting a production ceiling for OPEC?

[Answer] Work on the pipeline is continuing, and it will be completed on schedule. Oil exports will amount to approximately 3 million barrels of oil a day. Iraq is not committed to any production ceiling due to the conditions of the war.

[Question] Has there been anything new in Libya's position toward Iran in the wake of the scandal about Israeli weapons to Iran?

[Answer] A change in the media has been noticed; there has been a change in some of what is being broadcast and published in Libyan newspapers. In practice, however, the question about the authenticity of the change lingers. The time has come for Arabs to know that Iran is after their very existence just as Israel has been. Has Libya discovered Iran's aggressive policy and its connections with Zionists and imperialists? Has Libya found out about the suspect ties between Iranians, Zionists and imperialists, and has it discovered their common goals against the Arab nation? We would welcome any change in the Arab situation, no matter how small, in the hope that Arabs will find out the truth about Iran's attitude toward them.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF NEW MINISTERS PROVIDED

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 24 Mar 87 p 4

[Article: "Sketches of the Lives of the Minister of Transportation, and the Minister of Oil"]

[Text] Following are sketches of the lives of Mr Muhammad Hamzah, minister of transportation and communication, and 'Isam 'Abd-al-Rahim al-Jalabi, minister of oil:

Mr Muhammad Hamzah:

- Born in 1938 in the Province II, Babil.
- Joined the ranks of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party in 1954 and obtained the honor of membership in 1958.
- Member of the Ninth Pan-Arab Conference of the Party, held in Lebanon in 1968.
- Member of all the regional conferences and the senior cadre of the Party from 1964 till the 17-30 July Revolution of 1968.
- Held the posts of director general of the Office of the Secretariat of the Region and the Bureau of Arab Affairs in the RCC.
- On 10 January 1977, elected reserve member of the Party's Regional Command.
- In February 1977, appointed Governor of al-Ta'mim.
- On 27 June 1982, elected member in the Regional Command during the extraordinary conference of the Ninth Regional Conference.
- On 23 March 1987, appointed minister of transportation and communication.

Mr 'Isam 'Abd-al-Rahim al-Jalabi:

- Born in Baghdad in 1942.
- Obtained a mechanical engineering degree with honors from one of the British universities.
- Appointed chairman of the General Organization for Oil Projects in 1975.
- Appointed deputy chairman of the Iraqi National Oil Company in 1981.
- Appointed undersecretary in the Ministry of Oil and chairman of the Iraqi National Oil Company on 5 July 1983.
- On 23 March 1987, appointed minister of oil.

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ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE PENETRATES PFLP

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Mar 87 p 3

[Article by Gad Lior: "Israeli Intelligence Has Penetrated the Popular Front"]

[Text] The PFLP recently suffered a plague of arrests due to the fact that the Israeli intelligence succeeded in uncovering its activities and arresting dozens of its members." This and other data from publications of the Center for Alternative Information were revealed yesterday for the first time at the Jerusalem District Court during the discussion on extending the detention of the center's director, Mikha'el Warshawsky (37), until the end of the judicial proceedings against him.

Warshawsky is accused of possession of PFLP material, of providing the Front with printing services, and of bringing out a leaflet teaching members of the terrorist organization how to withstand interrogation by the General Security Service [SHABAK] if they are caught and investigated.

The prosecution claims that Warshawsky also received manuscripts of Popular Front publications, propaganda and incitement fliers, and other subversive material for the purpose of printing and mimeographing them in his office.

One of the fliers that were seized calls for avenging the Palestinian people. "Do not dash our hopes," the flier urges, "the great hour is in your steeled hands, in the mines and the bullets."

Before a packed court filled especially with Jewish and Arab leftists from Jerusalem, Judge Ya'aqov Bazaq read out passages from a magazine confiscated at the center.

Among other items from the magazine, the judge read a report on the arrest of dozens of fighters of the Popular Front as a result of actions by Israeli intelligence.

Another passage read by Bazaq stated: "In the past 20 years sons of the Palestinian people have carried out great and small acts of heroism in opposing the occupation and in struggles against army, border guards, police, and intelligence forces. That, in addition to the heroism that the people showed in direct confrontations and armed incidents with the enemy."

In his decision to extend Warshawsky's detention until the end of the court proceedings Judge Bazaq stated that in actual fact the accused put the center at the disposal of a terrorist organization, to serve as a center of action, propaganda, and storage.

Judge Bazaq utterly rejected the claim by the accused that everything that took place at the information center was legal in accordance with the principle of freedom of expression, and stated: "Some of the material went beyond just stating views by identifying with the actions of the Popular Front."

12782 CSO:4423/23

DIVORCE RATE AMONG MUSLIMS IN ISRAEL INCREASING

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 6 Mar 87 (Supplement--"Seven Days") pp 52-53, 55

[Article by Anat Tal-Shir: "With This Ring..."]

[Text] A husband and wife sit on opposite sides of a long table and seek a solution from the qadi of Nazareth. The young man has complaints, the young woman is bitter, and the qadi steers toward reconciliation. The young man filed a claim requesting obeisance from his wife. He wants her to return home and obey him. The qadi says: "I understand that you have been married for 2 years and that there are differences between you, because of, among other things, your different backgrounds. You are a city man from Nazareth, and you come from a Bedouin tribe." The husband says: "She fled to her mother and hid there for several weeks with our baby. Her mother incites her against me, she tells her not to come back home until I get her marble counter tops in the kitchen. I cannot do it. I am under great financial pressure. Perhaps you can explain to her how difficult it is to make a living today."

A shocking statistic from the Nazareth of 1987: in the past 4 years there has been a 300 percent increase in the number of divorces among Muslims in the northern areas of the country. The qadi of Nazareth and the surrounding villages, Shaykh Hasan 'Asadi finds himself more and more dealing with civil status files. Some 8 to 10 percent out of approximately 1,000 couples who marry each year, get divorced. Ten years ago, he says, people did not get divorced because of marble countertops in the kitchen.

The husband had filed his claim at the beginning of January, but the qadi will summon them for a discussion several weeks later. Not because the court is loaded down with so many filed (450 a year), but because he wants to let some time go by for the heat to cool off and for reason to prevail. Religion obligates the man to take care of the vital and basic needs of the wife: food, clothing, and a roof over her head. However, in the past decade, materialism has invaded the Muslim society, too, and it is eroding it. The qadi sees couples squabbling about a cooking stove, a food processor, or adding another room to the house, "like the neighbors."

The fights between husband and wife soon exceed the bilateral framework and seep through all the other strata of the family. One woman from a village in

the Galilee claimed that her husband does not make enough of an effort to earn money for the family and that he has other women in the city in which he works. One month later the whole village was split up, some siding with the wife's family and some with the husband's. The dispute became violent: windows were broken, cars were smashed, and young men were waving clubs and axes about. The qadi was summoned to mediate among the hawks, but the rift was so deep and so laden with hatred that he was compelled to decree a divorce in order to preempt further injury and damage.

The qadi, 51 years old, holds the position of judge and is the supreme religious authority for the 100,000 Muslim inhabitants of the area. His office is small and modest; to his left sits his secretary, who takes down the protocols. He is dressed in a blue 3-piece suit and a black robe is spread on the back of his chair. In 2 weeks time the qadi will have completed a computer course. His wife is a teacher on early retirement, his eldest daughter studies medicine in Jerusalem, his son is preparing to graduate from highschool, and his younger daughter is in the eighth grade.

"Life," he says, "parades before me like one long movie. Whenever I succeed in bringing peace to a household I feel happy and satisfied. And when I fail, I go home depressed and have trouble accepting the fact that there are things beyond my powers, things touching the depth of people's souls over which I have no control."

The qadi has a quiet and restful personality. During talks in his office, he remains calm and serene, correct and authoritative even when shouting and tears break out.

God, he says, did not put two hearts in a man's body, which makes the heart a receptacle for one woman. However, there are cases when he wishes he could allow a bigamous marriage, although the law prohibits it. A few weeks ago he ruled that a husband who divorced his wife because she could not give birth and married another woman, should compensate the divorced wife. "If I could allow the man to wed a second woman I could prevent a human tragedy."

After 12 years of serving in the job and watching the troubles of the Muslim society parade through his office, he decided to do what he calls a "minor study." He has found that Muslim parents rush their children into marriage, particularly their daughters. His formulations are tinged with criticism: "jump into it," "hitch a ride," "grab whatever is available." In each house in all of the villages under his jurisdiction there is one or more unmarried daughters. She is an economic burden on the family because her father's pride does not allow her to work; however, the major problem for the parents is of a psychological nature.

Once the daughter is over 24-25 years old, her chances to be married decrease. According to the qadi, there are more girls than boys numerically, and when parents finally find one who is ready to "buy the merchandise" (that is to say, the daughter), marginal considerations such as love, suitability, or understanding are not brought into account at all.

The majority of couples come to him before the consummation of the marriage. Weeks, months, and even years pass between the time that the ma'zun (the marriage broker) draws up the marriage contract and the time that the bride goes to live in the groom's house. The length of this time stands in inverse proportion to the financial situation. The more money the young man has to finish building and furnishing the house, the shorter the transition period. Once the marriage is realized, they hold the "hafla" that marks the move to the appointed house.

One couple came to the qadi 2 weeks back. He, an internal revenue collector, married his girl 3 and 1/2 years back, but she is still living in her parents' home. The girl, 21 years old, wanted a divorce because the young man could not finish the house he began building at the time. The qadi ruled that the girl give her husband an extension of several months.

The biggest trouble afflicting the rural Muslim society, in the qadi's opinion, is the problem of exchange marriages, along the line of I will marry your sister and you marry mine. However, because of family pride, if you divorce my sister, I will divorce yours. And it does not matter if the marriage is going well, if there are children, or if the couple does not at all want to get divorced. This type of arrangement has almost become the norm, and has split many families in the past few years.

"This custom," says qadi 'Asadi, "is stronger than logic. What logic can there be in making one marriage conditional upon another?"

The first time he encountered this phenomenon was in 1983, and he was horrified. But in the 4 years since then he has dealt with so many families broken because of "exchange marriages," that the shock has dissipated. In the past month he had a case that is arguably without precedent in the country. In a small village on the road to Tiberias, at the foot of Mount Tabor, lives the Sanduq family. The name of the family, like all the other names that will be given here, is fictitious; the editors have the real names. The case concerns two brothers, Ibrahim Sanduq (50), and Mahmud Sanduq (48). Ibrahim has 11 children, Mahmud has 10; all of the children are still unmarried, much to the parents' distress. Ibrahim's two sons and one daughter are of age, and so are Mahmud's two daughters and one son.

One Friday evening Mahmud went to Ibrahim's house; they sat on the porch, in the cool wind. After a few cups of coffee and one package of Time cigarettes, Mahmud said: Why don't we marry our children. My two daughters to your two sons, and my son to your daughter. My daughters will move in with you, and your daughter will come to live with me. Ibrahim said: I will think about it. Mahmud's idea was not original. In his village and in the neighboring villages he knew many parents who had solved the problem of their children through exchange marriages. He went home; the daughters agreed to the proposal, but to his surprise, his son showed signs of opposition.

Five months passed before he managed to persuade his son, a driver who transports vegetables to area markets, to agree to the deal. How did he persuade him? "By talking," said Mahmud. The six cousins and the parents went to the marriage broker in Nazareth and drew up a contract. Hilmi (27), married

Farida (30); Nafz (28) married Aziza (28); Jamil (19) promised to marry Nadia (16) as soon as she was 17 years old, the age at which Islam allows a girl to wed. The deal was closed, three brides for three grooms, and all first cousins.

Ibrahim, who had taken it upon himself to provide housing for his two sons and their brides, quickly finished two floors which he had begun building 4 years earlier. The mothers busied themselves planning the hafla. The village was excited about the triple wedding. Formally, the two older couples were already married, and in a few weeks time the marriages would be consummated by the move to the common home. Jamil and Nadia, the young ones, were engaged. When all of a sudden, tragedy struck. Somebody said they saw Nadia riding to town with a young man from the village in his car. Needless to say, the young man was not her intended husband. From here on glitches began to appear in the deal and to multiply until the whole thing fell apart, leaving behind it two wounded families, disappointment, pain, shame, and humiliation.

The engagement of the two youngest was broken. The ride to Nazareth, whether it indeed took place or not (Nadia categorically denied the accusation), sent the two families flying to the qadi's office. We want to get divorced, said the four young people, attempting to control their anger and the tension between them. The qadi, who never hastens to dissolve marriages, wanted to know the reason. The story of the Sanduq family unfolded before him, but he had trouble believing his ears: that a rumor could tear apart two families and a future one. Nadia, too, came to his office. Her former fiance refused to appear, and to this day he has not agreed to see her. The qadi tried to talk reason to the four, but his wise words and passages he cited from the Quran failed to make up for the family pride.

The qadi wrote in his ruling: "This is a case of exchange marriages among cousins, who tied their fates to one another... and decided to part in full agreement, because of an old and obsolete custom that they cannot shake loose... despite the fact that only one step separates them from the 21st century."

Obsolete, the qadi wrote, in an attempt to expose this distorted norm. After reading the ruling to the couples, the ceremony was held. The husband said: You, my present wife (finger pointing), are divorced from me. And the wife said: I agree to be divorced. The verdict did not mention Nadia. The court was not prepared to become a party in her stigmatization.

In the small village there are now two divorced women, a young girl whose virtue is tainted, and a hurt young man. The fathers, Ibrahim and Mahmud no longer talk to each other, and neither do their wives and children. Between the two families there is now a rift and bad feelings that only time may perhaps mend. "Even if Ibrahim should die," Mahmud said this week, "I would not go to his funeral."

It is perhaps better that the affair ended before it began in earnest, the qadi said. Otherwise they would have come to me tomorrow, in 1 month, or 1 year for any small dispute that would have cropped up between them. And if one couple had wanted to be divorced, the other two would have immediately gotten

divorced, too, even if by then they had had children. These women, he said, are still virgins and despite the fact that they are divorced, they still have a chance to remarry. A faint chance, he added.

The couple whose future depended on the marble counter tops sat in the qadi's office for over 1 hour. The girl was already pacified, the young man was being tough, but was glancing toward her from time to time. The qadi mediated and ruled in the matter of the marble counter tops: she was to return home henceforth and to obey, and he was to renovate the kitchen. He asked them to shake hands in his presence. The two stood up on the two sides of the table, shook hands, and smiled.

[box on page 55]

Marrying Off a Daughter

Mahmud Sanduq (fictitious name): "We have to get rid of the girls. It is no shame to admit it. Today it is hard to find grooms. My daughter sits home all day long. My pride does not allow me to let her go to work. My son is not getting married either, but he at least helps me. I have been sitting home for 5 years now, and my sons work on two trucks. They say to me: We do not want you to work. I am a construction worker, I worked 25 years on apartment houses."

"When I got married I was poor, but there was no custom that I had to build a house before the marriage. I saw my wife for the first time at the wedding, and we have been doing fine since then. We build together, and she helped me and gave me ten children. Today my sons can only get married if the father of the bride sees four walls, a bathroom, and a toilet."

"I love my daughters and I do not force them to marry just anyone who may ask. The eldest daughter, she is 28 now, says this one is too short, and that one does not know how to talk, and the other is stupid. That is how she is, and I will give her away only in honor, not by force. What should I do, go to the neighbor and ask him to take her? After what happened with my brother I wanted to marry her to a boy from another village whose sister would have married my son, but my daughter said: God forbid, I will sit home and wait for my fate."

Mahmud Sanduq's house is located in the middle of the village. The house of his brother Ibrahim is a 2 minutes walk away. Twelve people in two and one half rooms. The two youngest daughters are doing homework kneeling by a low and narrow coffee table. Mother Sanduq is in the small kitchen with a neighbor. Aziza (28), is mending tears in the covering of a mattress. Eight thin foam mattresses are spread on the floor of the main room. Aziza finished eighth grade and has been at home since then. She cooks, cleans, does the laundry, and takes care of the younger children. This year she began a hair styling course; she will be doing the hair of the village women on their wedding day.

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ISRAEL

BRIEFS

CONDUCTIVE CARBON DEVELOPMENT--Scientists of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have developed a synthetic material which doubles the conductivity of copper. It consists of graphite layers interlayered with fluorine, which produces a loose chemical bond. Electrical conductors made from the new materials are useful for applications in which its weight--half that of a copper conductor--is a factor. According to the scientists this could be the case in aeronautics and astronautics and other fields. [Text] [Bonn TECHNOLOGIE NACHRICHTEN-MANAGEMENT INFORMATIONEN in German No 445/446, 20 Dec 86 p 25] 8701

CSO: 3698/M127

LEBANON

CENTRAL BANK OFFICIAL DISCUSSES CURRENT MONETARY SITUATION

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 6 Mar 87 pp 44, 45

[Interview with Bank of Lebanon Second Vice Governor Majid Jumblatt by Walid Abu Murshid: "The Central Bank Has Turned into a Monetary and Financial Authority!"; date and place not specified]

[Text] The collapse of the Lebanese pound may not have caused anyone in Lebanon to stop to think, as far as the direct and direct reasons for it went. It was as if the downward course of the pound had become a "fait accompli" of the Lebanese crisis as a whole. However, the rate of this collapse has been accelerating recently in the wake of more than one query about the future of Lebanese currency in general and the role of the Central Bank in at least reining in its severe decline in particular.

AL-HAWADITH brought these questions to the second vice governor of the Bank of Lebanon, Majid Jumblatt, and the following conversation took place:

AL-HAWADITH: The recent collapse in the rate of the pound, bringing this rate to 130 to the dollar, raises numerous questions about its direct causes and the economic situation in Lebanon. What in your opinion is the direct factor behind the recent collapse?

Majid Jumblatt: It is not possible to separate the basic cause of the collapse of the pound from the political and economic situation Lebanon is going through. One of these reasons is the massive deficit in the general budget and the enormous difference between the government's revenues and expenditures. For example public spending in the current year, 1987, will exceed 75 billion pounds, while the government's revenues, in the best of cases, will not exceed 3 billion pounds.

This economic state of affairs is exerting constant pressure on the value of the pound, since the government provides its revenues in two ways: through indebtedness with the banks by treasury bonds and coverage of the deficit through subscriptions by loans from the Bank of Lebanon, which are in practice considered the pumping of new liquidity into the market that will result in strengthening the money supply in a very rapidly increasing fashion.

The second factor in the collapse of the pound may be attributed to the Lebanese people's fear of investing their money in Lebanon and consequently

the interruption in the flow of capital to Lebanon. This means that financial investments in Lebanese banks, especially foreign currency investments, are not being implanted in Lebanon but are fleeing from it with the first disruption in security. This situation has led to a deficit in the balance of payments in spite of the perceptible improvement in the balance of trade. However, the lack of confidence in the general situation, from which the flight of foreign deposits from Lebanon has resulted, makes the demand for foreign currency much greater than the supply, and this is leading to an additional rise in the price of foreign currencies in the Beirut market.

AL-HAWADITH: What about the economic reasons?

Majid Jumblatt: It is necessary to emphasize that national industrial and agricultural product, though improving because of the low cost of the materials produced in Lebanon and the low cost of the pound as well, is in practice declining because of the Lebanese people's aversion to investing in Lebanon. There is also a basic factor behind the decline in the pound, which is the continued presence of surplus liquidity in the hands of consumers due to the failure to collect taxes and duties. This surplus contributes to inflation and, in the absence of job opportunities and fields for production, a large portion of this liquidity is directed to non-productive objectives, foremost among them speculation. There is no doubt that speculation occupies a share of the responsibility for the collapse of the pound.

It is necessary to emphasize that the strength of the currency is derived not from the strength of the cover alone but also from the strength of the economic situation and the political stability of every country.

AL-HAWADITH: Let us go back to the public debt. We have been told that it now approaches 100 billion Lebanese pounds. In spite of that, this debt remains at its level, although it is constantly swelling if it is valued in dollars. Is there a banking policy which at least advocates disregarding the collapse of the pound in the desire not to inflate the public debt?

Majid Jumblatt: Here I would like to separate the two issues. Let me begin with the domestic debt. This debt, as is well known, is a debt in Lebanese pounds and not in foreign currency. This situation is considered one of the "positive features" of the financial situation in Lebanon and one of the basic elements in putting a future value on the pound. It is true that Lebanon incurred a small foreign debt during the years 1982, 1983 and 1984, but that is no more than \$300 million. It is necessary to point out that the process of borrowing from abroad has in practice been stopped and the Chamber of Deputies intends to approve special legislation prohibiting borrowing from abroad in foreign currencies by the public sector. As long as the debt remains domestic, however rapid the rate of inflation might be, the resumption of stability and the government's resumed pursuit of its normal role will guarantee the settlement of the problem of the domestic debt, especially since the government has, in the Central Bank, gold cover amounting to about \$4.5 billion in addition to monetary reserves.

AL-HAWADITH: What is the value of the monetary reserve which is not encumbered by commitments at the present time?

Majid Jumblatt: The monetary reserve is no secret and can be ascertained by reviewing the data of the Bank of Lebanon. This reserve is substantial, although there are some commitments on it.

AL-HAWADITH: What is the monthly or annual value of these commitments?

Majid Jumblatt: There are monthly public sector commitments, most important of which are those bearing on allocations of wheat and the fuel oil needed to run the electric plants and the subsidy funds for fuel, in addition to the requirements of public spending abroad (embassies, military missions and the military organization's needs for some equipment purchased in foreign currency). We must not forget that the Central Bank is ultimately the government's bank and must provide the government with foreign currency.

AL-HAWADITH: We would like to return to the second part of the question, that is, is there an official policy to disregard the decline of the pound in the desire to keep the public debt, valued in dollars, at approximately a stable level?

Majid Jumblatt: The Bank of Lebanon does not define the government's financial policy and is not the body which determines spending. It is well known that it is the government, through the Ministry of Finance, which is the body that sets the volume of public spending and has brought a financial deficit of this great magnitude on itself. As for ourselves, we are considered a public sector agency whose sole mission is to preserve the value of the domestic currency as far as possible. Moreover, I wonder what interest any central bank in the world has in lowering the value of its country's currency, even if it has abundant reserves. Let us not forget that the central bank is responsible for the social character of the country's economy and it is not in its interests in this context to inflame the accelerating inflation in Lebanon. The social effect of inflation in this form is to be considered very dangerous, aside from its effect on the economic situation and the banking sector itself. Therefore, the central bank cannot be "against" its currency and society and it basically does not seek profit from its banking activities.

AL-HAWADITH: What is your personal opinion regarding the recent general instructions of the Bank of Lebanon, especially since the general instruction to reduce liquidity and the general instruction to remove the Eurolira from the arena of speculation have not, as is clear, led to a halt in the decline of the pound, emphasizing that monetary measures alone are not enough to stabilize the rate of the pound? Is there then a role which the bank plays in the context of imparting financial and economic advice to the government?

Majid Jumblatt: I concur with the view which holds that monetary policy alone is not adequate to rein in the decline in the pound, not just in Lebanon but in any country whatever, and that a tax and monetary policy complementary to that in the context of the government is necessary. This does not prevent us in the bank from feeling that we have a special responsibility which we bear in this area, especially since the crisis we are facing in Lebanon is considered one of a kind in the world when compared with other international experiences. This matter forces us to adopt measures which the

law dictates to us, in addition to our financial knowledge. We, in spite of our awareness that monetary policy alone will not solve the problem, are sometimes compelled to act like something close to a finance ministry in Lebanon and, because of the absence of the government, bear responsibilities for which we are not fundamentally liable. For example, it is not the mission of the bank to impose compulsory reserve ratios except when it sees that the money supply has become grossly inflated. However, our goal in this measure has been to curb and control liquidity as much as possible and therefore finance the public sector.

During the past year, the bank has sought to squeeze spending to the maximum possible limits, so much so that it came down to a confrontation between us and the government, after we had decided not to give it new loans and to subscribe treasury bonds only at specific ratios. In spite of that, the Bank of Lebanon gave the government about 19 billion pounds.

AL-HAWADITH: However, the policy of financing the government through bonds and the bank is in fact a policy of "self-defeating practices" and the pound will ultimately pay the price for this policy through its buying power. What will the ultimate consequences be?

Majid Jumblatt: This is the actual situation. I will make it no secret that it is impossible for the situation to continue in this manner. If some people imagine that the problem is merely technical, I can assert that that is not the way it is, and is not a problem of "mistakes" which the Central Bank or the Lebanese banking sector have committed. The problem is the problem of the whole country and the situation requires a comprehensive solution. The problem is no longer simple. It is greater than the bank and concerns the economic and financial situation in Lebanon.

AL-HAWADITH: What has arisen of late in your relationship with Intra?

Majid Jumblatt: It is one of the duties of the Bank of Lebanon, as the biggest participant in the Intra investment company, to have a presence in the company, the general assembly and the board of directors and consequently to oversee the company's activities. At a specific point, a difference of views occurred between the bank and Intra, and the governor saw fit to file suit against Intra, since that is one of the governor's powers and not one of the powers of the central board. He asked the company, as a representative of the Bank of Lebanon, to call the general assembly to meet and form a new board of directors.

AL-HAWADITH: However, the bank lost the case.

Majid Jumblatt: Yes, in the first stage.

AL-HAWADITH: Does that mean that the bank will appeal the case?

Majid Jumblatt: I would prefer that that happen.

AL-HAWADITH: Let us talk about the recent changes in the leadership of Intra. Were there specific Lebanese and Arab motives behind that?

Majid Jumblatt: I am not in a position that can empower me to go into the details of these changes. I hope that the new chairman and the new board will cooperate with the Central Bank, because the bank is anxious to retain the continuity of this organization, which is considered a quasi-public one. As for Arab participation in the organization, its importance is not to be attributed so much to its size as to its significance. When an Arab country is among those participating in Intra, that means Arab support for Lebanon and we encourage it.

AL-HAWADITH: How do you evaluate the powers of the Bank of Lebanon in comparison with the powers of the central banks in Western countries? Are they absolute in the realm of monetary affairs, like those of the Bundesbank in West Germany or the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States?

Majid Jumblatt: The powers of the Bank of Lebanon are no less than those of any Western central bank and are considered absolute in the monetary area. There are very important powers which the governor of the Bank of Lebanon enjoys; hence the emphasis on the Bank of Lebanon which we have noted in the recent period. Many responsibilities lie upon the bank in general and its governor in particular. The requisite authorities exist in reality, but the source of the problem is that monetary policy in Lebanon is not in harmony with monetary policy most times, and in addition the economic situation we are going through in Lebanon is a very difficult one and has compelled the bank to fill the vacuum of financial authority. One should bear in mind that that is not part of its responsibilities or duties. This state of affairs has caused the bank gradually to be transformed into a monetary authority and to some extent a financial authority. As I previously pointed out, the Central Bank has set the governments' expenditures at the necessary minimum, one, subsidies for food, two, electricity, and three, the salaries and wages of government employees, that is, the expenditures necessary for the survival of the government.

AL-HAWADITH: However, has the government restricted itself to the necessary the minimum of expenditures?

Majid Jumblatt: We are trying, with all our effort, to arrive at an agreement in this regard with the government, on grounds that the circumstances we are passing through are very delicate ones and require everyone's response and cooperation. Here I would like to stress the Bank of Lebanon's concern to control spending within its minimum.

AL-HAWADITH: Is there an official tendency, within the bank, to encourage small banks to merge to cope with the difficult circumstances the economy of Lebanon and the banking sector are passing through?

Majid Jumblatt: We in the bank greatly encourage the merger of Lebanese banks, not to form small banks or large ones but on an objective basis which requires the merger of banks into sound banking units. We have encouraged the establishment of a joint university-banking symposium to study the theoretical possibilities of the bank merger process. The issuance of new legislation will perforce result from this. In general, we are in favor of the merger of banks and restriction of their number to be "tailored to" the requirements of Lebanon and the need for Beirut to continue to play its role as a major banking center in the Middle East.

AL-HAWADITH: Is it possible to conclude from your encouragement of merger policy that some banks are going through difficult conditions?

Majid Jumblatt: To the contrary, the general state of the Lebanese banking sector is good and sound and its conditions are constantly being monitored, in spite of the difficult conditions Lebanon is going through.

AL-HAWADITH: Mentioning followup, is it possible to say that the policy of sovereignty in the oversight of bank activities has slackened? If the answer is no, how can one explain the recent grant of permission to someone responsible for a Lebanese bank which had succumbed to a deficit surrounded by circumstances that provoked a great commotion to return to the banking sector and open a new bank?

Majid Jumblatt: That subject specifically is the power of the governor of the Bank of Lebanon and I cannot evaluate the considerations which made it mandatory for him to give permission to this official to return to banking activity again. Perhaps you have been correct regarding some aspects of this issue. It is to be taken for granted that the people responsible for the banking sector possess banking competence and moral fitness.

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BANGLADESH

POOR QUALITY, SHADY PRACTICES ACCOMPANY TEXTILE BOOM

Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG/BLICK DURCH DIE WIRTSCHAFT in German
26 Feb 87 p 2

[Article by Peter Odrich, Hong Kong: "Bangladesh Is Having a Textile Boom--But Export Quotas Are Not Being Fully Used; Not All Suppliers Are Honest Businessmen"]

[Text] Ever since its separation from Pakistan, Bangladesh has been experiencing substantial and repeated ups and downs in its textile market situation. Aside from its significant jute fiber processing, at present this country is producing outer garments above all. At the beginning of the 1980's the clothing industry was still relatively small. Then the initial boom came. The industry grew to about 700 enterprises employing 200,000 people. Then the clothing market fell to pieces. About half of the businesses had to give up, and a corresponding number of jobs were lost. Since then it has moved upwards again. The most recent turn came in 1985. Not all the bankruptcies had been settled yet when within a space of 12 months hundreds of new clothing enterprises emerged.

There are a number of reasons for these violent swings. First of all, so far the government has never intervened in these rises and falls. The industry has been neither favored nor discriminated against by economic policy. All new establishments and closures are exclusively a matter of private undertakings and decisions. Moreover, the East Asians are substantially influencing the clothing industry in Bangladesh. Businessmen from Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea have become involved in Bangladesh and open or close factories there from one day to the next. Again, there are several reasons for this extensive and by no means always beneficial foreign commitment.

For one thing, the low wages are inducing companies from the large East Asian textile countries to move a part of their production to Bangladesh. Secondly, for a long time Bangladesh was free of export quotas, and at present it has larger quotas than the country can use, in all probability. The latter point is precisely the essential reason why Bangladesh is again experiencing an upswing in its clothing industry at this time.

The quota apportionment system in Bangladesh differs drastically from the regulations in other countries. For example, in Hong Kong or Korea the

businesses receive their basic quota in accordance with their export performance in the past. If they need a higher quota, then they must buy it on the free market. The whole thing takes a speedy course, and with the exception of the cost it has no disadvantages for the businesses. Things are different in Bangladesh. The Export Promotion Board in Dacca needs up to 6 months to make an allocation decision. Only 40 percent of the quotas depend on the export results of the past. The remaining 60 percent are reserved by the Board for new competitors and then given mostly to smaller new businesses. Trading with quotas is forbidden. For this reason, businesses that need higher quotas must take other paths. It is said in the industry that this begins with bribery in connection with the quota distribution and extends to all sorts of so-called shady tricks. De facto, an extensive export quota black market has developed from this. A substantial disadvantage in this is that because of these complications it is not at all possible in practice for this country to actually fully fill its export quota.

Other shady dealings also flourish around this quota black market, such as in connection with the importing of raw materials. A company that can show an export contract does not have much difficulty in obtaining a license to import raw materials amounting to up to 75 percent of the final production value. But often this importing right is used simply to import other textiles, because these guarantee high profits on the domestic market. If subsequently the central bank is informed that the original export contract has fallen through, then the importing company has no need to fear any other negative consequences than a 10-percent fine. In view of the high domestic prices for textiles in principle not cleared for importing, this fine is paid with ease.

Indeed, especially slick companies have gone so far as to not pay for the imported goods, thus also avoiding having to pay any fine. By the time the foreign supplier has earnestly begun pressing for his money, the importing company has long since changed hands and name. These practices have reached such an extent in Bangladesh that nowadays the East Asian suppliers themselves often are ready to deliver only against cash in advance or a bank guarantee.

The fact that foreign buyers of articles of clothing produced in Bangladesh are also not always happy with the delivered goods can be explained on the one hand by the massive delivery delays. But for another thing there are also defects in quality, and this is doing damage to the reputation of Bangladesh. Finally, the fabricating of textiles also suffers from the fact that the government in Dacca is endeavoring to push through a minimum value added of 25 percent for the textile industry. All of this together also contributes to the fact that this country has hardly been in a position so far to exhaust its export quotas. In all probability, not much will change in this regard in the foreseeable future.

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